

Bible Light on Present Events

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The writer of this little book would thank all who have sought to pass on to others the urgent message it contains, and thus have made it possible to publish this second edition.

The year 1960 proved to be a very momentous one. In addition to some terrible earthquakes, in this one year many parts of the great Continent of Africa have flared up with serious trouble; and we fear it portends in some areas still greater trouble in the days to come. The tension between Russia and the Western nations has at times greatly increased, and there is still no solution to the grave problems the world is facing.

No-one can tell how long or how short this testing time may be before God's time for intervention arrives: but we need to live in readiness for that great Day.

May God graciously forgive the many imperfections of this book; and use all that has come from His Book and from His Spirit for His Glory, and to the awakening of His people to the solemn meaning of present world events.

SUMMER, 1961.

WHITFIELD COTTAGE, WEST ROAD,
MILFORD-ON-SEA, LYMINGTON,
HANTS.

FOREWORD.

BY the REVEREND PREBENDARY COLIN C. KERR, M.A., H.C.F.
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THE CHURCH SILENT IN A VOCAL WORLD!

Could there be a greater condemnation?

We must, however, be precise. The Church in many ways is reawakening. Her voice is sounding out with a glorious certainty as touching much that is vital. There is indeed a great wave of Evangelism spreading through the country. New hope has come to many churches where for years little happened to suggest the reality of personal conversion. The call to the Mission field, to social work at home, has found quite a ready response. We are not unmindful of all this and, indeed, much else, but we still speak of a tragic and criminal silence. To what is the reference? The reference is to that which is the greatest event in the future, the personal and probably near coming back to earth of Jesus Christ. As touching this, the churches' true hope, an almost complete silence exists, or at best an innocuous blurr has taken the place of a clarion call.

This indictment is the more serious since many of the leaders of science, of economics, of politics, are not merely vocal but in unqualified terms are declaring what to them seems to be the inevitable end of the world as we know it and of *Homo Sapiens* as we have him today. Indeed they are using the very apocalyptic language which the leaders of the churches formerly used in describing those conditions which will exist when Jesus Christ returns.

But why this silence? May it not be due to the resurgence of spiritualising prophecy. Today, the natural interpretation of a prophecy, that is other than the first and local application, is seldom given. Israel is no longer Israel but the Church! The Day of the Lord is no longer that period which every converted Jew understood it to be, but some vague Divine Judgment. The restoration of the

Jews must be thought of in terms of the expansion of the Church! and much else of a similar kind. The result has been that many who are faithful exponents of the great Evangel of personal salvation have been led into vague generalisations so far as prophecy is concerned and, in consequence, have little of a concrete order to say and hence have lapsed into this criminal silence.

There is no likelihood that the reader of this book will be left in such vague generalities. The author believes that the Bible means what it says and says what it means. He shows how history has patently and insistently endorsed the predictions of Scripture and as it still unfolds runs parallel with its Scriptural forecasts. But more, and perhaps this is the most important part of this valuable little book in which so much that is vital and varied is condensed, history shows in its more recent happenings that the tempo of fulfilment is speeding up at a simply alarming rate.

After centuries Israel is back as a nation in the Promised Land and already has become the sparking point of the Near East. The drama of the closing conditions so far as Palestine is concerned is developing almost overnight. Movements among the nations all but bankrupt of hope are tending towards the only expedient the world can suggest for its woes, i.e. a Parliament of Nations. Of this the Antichrist, soon, may be, to be revealed, will be the welcomed head. The stage for Armageddon, that battle in which the outpoured jealousies of Gentile nations, will be released upon Israel is all but ready.

But wait ; before all this is finalised our Blessed Lord will call for His Church. The glorious Rapture will unite us to Him with those of our loved ones who have gone before, before the final release of the forces of deception and darkness.

It is because this book, with its factual, clear, convincing presentation of our Lord's Return and the conditions to which He comes, challenges its readers to serious life and living that with great gladness I have responded to the invitation of one of my greatest friends, i.e. the author, to write this foreword.

INTRODUCTION.

MR. JOHN URQUHART, the author of the much-valued book, "*The Wonders of Prophecy*," records in the dedication to his book on the prophecies that Bishop Newton refers to some conversations he had with Marshal Wade. The latter laughed at the alleged proof of Christianity from the fulfilment of prophecy, and all argument was set aside with the observation that the predictions were written after the events. The Bishop urged in reply that there were several prophecies which were not fulfilled till recent times and several more which were beyond doubt written centuries before the events happened. The Marshal was startled, and said he must acknowledge that, if this point could be proved to satisfaction, there would be no argument against such plain matter of fact; it would certainly convince him, and he believed, would be the readiest way to convince every reasonable man of the truth of revelation.

So many Bible prophecies are being fulfilled in our own day that, if they are carefully examined, to any unprejudiced person they must supply the sure evidence that the Bible is the Word of God, and not myth and fable which infidels would have us believe.

The apostle Peter expressly tells us in his second letter, chapter 1, verse 19: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

Commenting on this verse, Dr. Grattan Guinness writes thus: "Is it unpractical to make use of a good lantern on a pitch-dark night in traversing a dangerous road? Or is it not rather unpractical and unreasonable to attempt to dispense with it?"

The Bible describes the world as a dark place, and we do indeed need all the light we can obtain to see where we are and what is ahead. The lamp of prophecy is the

sure light which God has provided for us; and those people are foolish who think we can do without this light.

Moreover, there is no doubt that the prophecies of the Bible which occupy a third of the whole Book have a sanctifying effect on those who carefully study them, and are the means of greatly increasing our faith in the Divine Author of this wonderful Word.

Dr. Grattan Guinness writes thus on Prophecy:

"There is everything in the nature of the study to make those who pursue it both practical and holy. It imbues the mind with the counsels and judgment of God about the affairs and events of earth. It affords to hope much needed food, lacking which she must languish and grow feeble; and to faith and love, peculiar stimulus and enjoyment. Without an intelligent acquaintance with the teaching of the prophetic word, no man of God is, or can be, thoroughly furnished to all good works, for it is part of the "all Scripture" given by inspiration, and profitable for the purpose of rendering him so."

This little book is written in three parts.

Part 1. The past fulfilment of prophecy.

The purpose of the first part is to prove that the Word of God has been fulfilled in past history; and that therefore we have in the Bible a book which is true and reliable, and are able to trust what God has chosen to teach us in other parts of the same book.

Part 2. The present fulfilment of prophecy.

The purpose of the second part is to shew that the Bible is an up-to-date book in that its striking prophecies concerning the closing days of this Gospel age or dispensation are being fulfilled before our eyes today. The Bible is not only a book of intense interest because it deals with men and women who lived a very long time ago; but it also contains wonderful predictions about the events of this twentieth century, about events

which are now being recorded in our daily papers. Therefore it is a book on which we can fully depend for light and help and hope today.

Part 3. The future fulfilment of prophecy.

The purpose of the third part is to give God's people a sure and certain hope with regard to the future. If strange predictions have been fulfilled in the past; and if other strange predictions are being fulfilled before our eyes today, then surely it is only logical to believe that those prophecies which concern the days that lie ahead, which are found in the same wonderful book must also be literally and minutely fulfilled. It would be most illogical to believe otherwise.

Some of these prophecies about the future may seem to our finite minds to be fantastic and unreal; they may seem to us who live in this twentieth century to overleap the possibilities of scientific knowledge and achievement today; but we must remind our readers that there is no limit to the power of our God who has promised to do these wonderful things. When we are tempted to limit the power of almighty God let us remember the mighty miracles recorded in the Bible, that God is the Creator of the universe; it is He who has placed that mighty ball of fire in the heavens which has been giving light and heat for all these thousands of years and is still doing the same today. With God all things are possible. Let us firmly believe that what He has promised must come to pass; then our hearts will be filled with the great joy of knowing the certainty of the fulfilment of those prophecies concerning events which must shortly take place.

Before you read and study these wonderful prophecies will you lift up your heart to God and ask Him to reveal His truth to you by His Holy Spirit and to give you a heart to trust your God.

Part 1.

THE PAST FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

In considering the prophecies of the Old Testament which have now had their fulfilment, we must answer the objection of some people who argue that the prophecies were written after the events took place. If this were so then indeed there was nothing miraculous about them. The Old Testament was fully completed centuries before our Lord was born at Bethlehem. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, called "The Septuagint," was made in the third century before Christ, and in many places in the New Testament we find quotations from the Septuagint version, which proves that the Septuagint version was in existence in the time of the apostles, and thus the prophecies of the Old Testament could not have been written after the time when our Lord was on earth.

We should remember this important fact when we consider some of the great predictions which are found in the Old Testament. Let us take first :

1. The prophecies concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

A great line of Messianic prophecies run right through the pages of the Old Testament, from the first wonderful prediction in Genesis 3 : 15, when God said to Satan, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Here we see that God promises that Satan will inflict the coming Seed of the woman with a temporary bruising (The heel), whereas the woman's Seed would inflict a crushing blow on Satan (his head).

From that time onwards in all sorts of unexpected places we find further intimations of the coming Messiah. He was to be descended from Abraham (Genesis 22 : 18), and from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49 : 10). The prophet Micah names the very village where Jesus was to be born,

and tells us it is Bethlehem (Micah 5 : 2). From this passage in the Old Testament the chief priests and scribes were able to inform Herod where the King of the Jews would be born (Matthew 2 : 4 to 6), and they proved to be quite correct (Luke 2 : 4 to 7). Isaiah foresees the adoration of the Magi (compare Isaiah 60 : 3 with Matthew 2 : 11) Jeremiah foretells the death of the innocents. (Jeremiah 31 : 15 and Matthew 2 : 17 and 18). Isaiah pictures Him preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken-hearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives (Isaiah 61 : 1 to 3). Our Lord claims that Isaiah wrote of Him (Luke 4 : 16 to 21). Zechariah sees this lowly King riding upon an ass into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9 : 9). This is exactly what our Lord did only a few days before He died (Matthew 21 : 1 to 11). The psalmist records His betrayal by one of His own disciples (Psalm 41 : 9). Zechariah tells us of the thirty pieces of silver that were weighed for His price, and how the money was cast to the potter (Zechariah 11 : 12 and 13). (Jeremiah 19. Matthew 27 : 3 to 10). Isaiah sees Him taken from one court of trial to another (Isaiah 53 : 8) (John 18 : 24 and 28). Isaiah foretells His scourging and His being spat upon (Ch. 50; 6. Matthew 26 : 67; and 27 : 26 to 30). The psalmist describes in Psalm 22 the actual way in which He died, i.e., by crucifixion. (Verse 16, "They pierced My hands and My feet.") He sees Him mocked by the passers-by (Psalm 22 : 6 to 8. Matthew 27 : 39 to 44).

Some might object that all these prophecies were fulfilled by our Lord or by His disciples in order to deceive people that Jesus was the Messiah. It is true that it is recorded in John 19 : 28, "That the scripture might be fulfilled, He saith 'I thirst.'" But who would be foolish enough to suggest that the Roman soldiers at Calvary were trying to fulfil the prophecy in Psalm 22, when they divided our Lord's garments among themselves, but because His coat was more valuable they cast lots for that. This was what the psalmist foretold in Psalm 22 : 18, "They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." The exact fulfilment is found in John 19 : 23 and 24.

Zechariah records in Ch. 12 : 10, "They shall look on

Him whom they pierced." After our Lord had died the apostle John records that one of the Roman soldiers pierced our Lord's side with his spear (John 19 : 34). Our Lord's resurrection before His body could go to corruption is foretold in Psalm 16 : 10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell (Hades); neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."

In Psalm 68 : 18 our Lord's ascension is also foretold, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive."

Here are only some of the great prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah who was to come; there are many more, and they have all been minutely fulfilled in the Person of our Lord Jesus. If some should desire still further proof of the Divine character of Biblical prophecy proved to be Divine by its accurate fulfilment in history let us consider other examples.

2. God's foretold judgments on the Jewish nation.

God declared very plainly to the Israelites through Moses that if they continued to disobey His commandments and to rebel against His authority, He would send His judgments upon them. Leviticus 26 : 30 to 34, "I will destroy your high places, . . . I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation . . . I will scatter you among the heathen (nations), and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste," etc.

History records that no nation on the face of the earth has ever been punished so severely and for such a length of time as the Jewish people. What has happened to them has been exactly what was foretold by God would happen; and this was revealed by God to Moses a great many centuries before it actually took place.

After the Jewish rulers had compelled the Roman Governor to crucify our Lord, after they had still further rejected and persecuted to death the heralds of the Cross, the great judgment from God came on them: In 70 A.D. the Roman armies swept the land with fire and sword.

The priesthood perished; the Temple was burned and ruthlessly demolished; the Holy places were literally brought into desolation; multitudes of Jews perished, many were taken to Rome as slaves; a great number were scattered throughout the world. In 135 A.D. the ruin of the people was completed. In this second resistance against Rome, 580,000 fell by the sword, in addition to those who perished by famine, disease or fire. Their cities were destroyed, and the land was wholly depopulated. Their sufferings during the long centuries of their dispersion have been appalling; truly God has drawn out a sword after them. The land they left, a land once flowing with milk and honey, was eventually to become desolate and her cities waste. Has this too been fulfilled? Indeed it has, in exact agreement with the prediction given by Moses. Many travellers who visited Palestine in the later centuries of the Jewish dispersion have testified to the utter desolation of the country and to the utter ruin of their once populous and thriving cities.

How can these prophecies be explained away? It would be more foolish for people to try and disprove the facts of the Norman Conquest and the invasion of the Spanish Armada, to say that these great historic events never took place, than to try and prove that the hand of God was not behind these wonderful prophecies and their accurate fulfilment. How Satan hates God's Word and inclines his followers to deny its Divine inspiration. A new dictionary published in godless Russia gives the following definition of the Bible:—"The Bible is a collection of fantastic legends without scientific support. It is full of dark hints, historical mistakes and contradictions. It serves as a factor for gaining power and subjugating the nations." We Christians believe that there is such a thing as Satanic inspiration as well as Divine inspiration. And the words above give us a good example of both. Let us consider:

3. The prediction in the Old Testament concerning the city of Tyre.

Tyre was undoubtedly one of the great cities of the ancient world. But because this important city spoke

against God's city, Jerusalem, and hoped to make good material gain when Jerusalem's downfall took place, God pronounced her coming doom.

This is what we read in Ezekiel Ch. 26, verses 3, 4, 5, 12 and 14. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee . . . and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea . . . And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water . . . Thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God."

It is a most striking and unique prophecy, and humanly speaking it seemed most improbable that such a complete devastation of this character would ever take place.

It would be ridiculous for anyone to affirm that God chose for His predictions events which were likely to come to pass; nothing more unlikely than this could be imagined.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came with his army against Tyre, and after besieging it for thirteen years, he captured it and then broke down her walls and towers. However, the governors of Tyre saved much of their wealth by transporting it to an island about half a mile from the shore. Nebuchadnezzar left the city in ruins and thus a part of the prediction was fulfilled. But as yet the stones and dust and timber had not been cast "in the midst of the water." Is it likely that any people would take the trouble to carry the rubbish of a ruined city and to throw it into the midst of the sea? Nevertheless, God's Word **must come** to pass. Centuries after this happened, Alexander the Great came with his swift legions sweeping towards the East and conquering all who stood against him. The people of Tyre thought that they were secure in their island fortress and refused to admit him. What did this great general do? He ordered a causeway to be built from the shore to the island. In order to execute his plan, he took the "stones" and "timber" and "dust" of this demolished city and cast them in the sea between the shore and

the island; then he was able to capture the island city by marching his troops across the rough road which he had made in this way. And so a second part of this extraordinary prediction was fulfilled a long time after the original city was destroyed; how very accurate the Word of God is proved to be. Now after another 2,300 years the third part of this most interesting prediction is being fulfilled.

The third fact foretold about Tyre was: "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea . . . and thou shalt be built no more." Tyre is marked on our maps, but it is the island Tyre, which is now a peninsula because of the sand which has drifted down the centuries against the causeway made by Alexander the Great. This is a town with thousands of inhabitants; but the original city on the mainland which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar has disappeared. The writer has seen a photograph of fishermen spreading their nets on the rocks where once stood the great city of Tyre 2,500 years ago. Our God's knowledge of the future is as clear and definite as His knowledge of the past. It is only by God's foreknowledge and His revealing it to the prophet Ezekiel that such a specific and accurate prediction could have been made.

In the light of these facts, how could we doubt the truth of these wonderful prophecies of the Old Testament?

4. The prophecy concerning Sidon.

Sidon is a town on the seacoast of Syria, about twenty miles north of Tyre. The prediction about Sidon is very different from that concerning Tyre. This is what is foretold in Ezekiel 28: 20 to 23. "The Word of the Lord came unto me saying, 'Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; behold I am against thee, O Zidon . . . for I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the Lord.'"

It was predicted of Tyre that she would be destroyed,

made bare, and never built again. But Sidon was to have a different judgment. Blood would be shed in her streets and the sword would wound her people on every side. Unlike Tyre, she was not to be made extinct; yet her sufferings through war were to be great. Today Sidon is still in existence after all these centuries, but again and again she has suffered severely through attacks of armies.

In 351 B.C. the city revolted against the Persians, and when the Persian army came against them, thousands of the people chose to kill themselves rather than face death at the hands of the Persians. Again, in the time of the Crusades, the city was terribly stricken by the sword. At least six battles were fought to gain possession of the city at different times. It was captured first by one side and then recaptured by the other side. Right up to modern times battles have been fought at Sidon between the Druses and the Turks, and between the Turks and the French. In 1840 the combined fleets of England, France and Turkey bombarded the city.

So we see how true was this prediction about Sidon. Many times blood has been shed in her streets, and the sword has been upon her on every side, and yet, unlike Tyre, she has survived it all.

What human being could have seen into the future centuries and foretold accurately the fate of these two ancient cities? The Bible informs us that the Word of the Lord came to the prophet Ezekiel, and so this prophet learned from God Himself what was going to take place many centuries later. This is the only possible explanation of such extraordinary and accurate predictions. Whatever infidels may say, the Bible proves itself again and again to be a super-human book, and woe be to those who reject the clear testimony of this Divine book.

For the same Word which contains so many miracles of prophecy also gives us God's way of saving guilty men and women from the penalty and power of sin. It reveals to us the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God who came down to this world from Heaven to die for our sins on the cross and to reconcile to His Father all who come to Him and put their whole trust in the crucified and risen Saviour.

These miraculous predictions prove the truth and authority of Holy Scripture and so provide us with a sure and solid foundation for our faith in the Saviour.

Let us take one more example of past fulfilment of prophecy.

5. A prophecy concerning Jerusalem.

This prophecy is found in the book of the prophet Micah: Chapter 3, verse 12. "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field."

It has been said that no city in the world has been besieged so many times as the city of Jerusalem. When the Babylonian army captured it we read that the walls of the city were broken down. When the Romans under Titus took it in A.D. 70 the city was demolished. Down the Christian era it has been besieged and captured on many occasions. Moslems and Christians have fought to possess it. But it was indeed a very strange prediction which stated that such an important part of the ancient city as Zion, the city of their great king David, should one day be ploughed as a field. Jerusalem is described in the Bible as God's city, "The city of the great King," the city which was to last right on to the day when the Saviour would come in His Glory and set up His Kingdom. What an extraordinary prophecy that this very important part of the ancient city was one day going to be ploughed as a field. Strange as it must have seemed to the deeply religious Jew, yet it has come to pass even as God's Word said it would.

How did this happen?

In the year 1542 the present walls of Jerusalem were built by the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. In rebuilding the walls he left Zion, the city of David, outside the area which he enclosed. Dr. William Thomson in "The Land and the Book" published a long time ago writes thus on Jerusalem as he saw it in his day: "Mount Zion is now for the most part a rough field. From the tomb of David I passed on through fields of ripe grain. It is the only part of Jerusalem that is now, or ever has been, plowed." Again we do well to pause and ask ourselves how

could the prophet Micah know what the Sultan Suleiman would decide to do 2,000 years after he wrote his prophecy. There is only one explanation, and that is The Bible is the Word of God.

There are many other wonderful predictions in the Bible but we have not the space to consider any more. But let the ones we have considered convince every reader of these pages that the Bible is quite unique; there is not another book in the world like it. It is sealed with the authority of God and bears throughout its pages the impress of truth and reliability.

Perhaps some person may be reading these pages who has been brought up to disbelieve the Bible and to scoff at the thought that it could be the Word of our living God, or someone who has come under the influence of an intellectual master or mistress who taught you at school or college to doubt the historicity and reliability of the Bible and to regard it as a book whose miraculous stories are only myth and fable, and so you have lost all faith in the Bible as the Word of God and you have been forced to believe through their teaching that the God who made the world cares so little for human beings that He has given to the world no revelation of Himself, and nothing to shew how man can be brought into fellowship with God. If this has been your attitude to the Bible up to the present the writer would urge you to give this subject of prophecy a real test. It is not as if there were many books in the world which claim to be the Word of God. There is only one book in the world which makes this claim, and that book is the Bible. The writer remembers being greatly impressed by hearing Dr. Dick Wilson of America make this statement many years ago. It is the only book in the world where we so constantly read such phrases as "Thus saith the Lord" and "The Word of the Lord came unto . . . saying" and "The Lord spake unto . . . saying." Either such statements were concocted by men who wanted to deceive people, or God actually made His Word known in this way. If God has spoken to the world in the way the Bible declared that He did, then it is an awful and terrible thing if men put the Bible on one side and refuse to pay

heed to it, for by adopting this attitude they are giving God no opportunity to make His will known to them through the Bible. If the Bible is God's Word as it claims to be and men treat it in this way then they are guilty of blindly disobeying His commands and neglecting His warnings. God has given man the opportunity of testing the great claims made by the Bible. He has provided the means for testing whether the Bible is a pack of lies or God's reliable Word. The means for testing the Bible is in the book itself. As we have seen, extraordinary predictions have been made in this Book; if they have been literally fulfilled centuries after they were made, then indeed we have a convincing proof that mere man could not have concocted them, and so these statements must have come from the mind and heart of God. If men are inclined to doubt the Divine origin of these wonderful prophecies let them make a thorough investigation of the whole matter of prophecy and its fulfilment for themselves. If men refuse to do this and to make such a test, then they are choosing to spurn the very evidence of God's truthfulness which He has provided for those who are beset by doubts. To refuse to test the evidence provided by God in the Bible is a sign of extreme folly and must merit the anger of God. The writer was privileged to know Sir Robert Anderson, at one time head of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard. He heard him give his testimony on one occasion to the power of prophecy. When he was a young man he was greatly influenced by the Higher Critical writings of Dr. Driver: as he found himself imbibing those destructive theories on the Bible, he found that his faith in the Bible as the Word of God was becoming weaker and weaker, and he realised one day that he was swiftly becoming an infidel. Somehow his mind was directed to the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and he made up his mind that he would give the whole subject of Prophecy a very careful study. He began to compare the predictions of the Old Testament with their recorded fulfilment in the New Testament. He testified that it was this careful testing of the means God has provided for knowing if the Bible is dependable which

saved him from becoming an infidel and brought him back to a firm belief in the Bible as the Word of God.

But the trouble with so many people is that they have no desire to give God's Word a proper test. They do not want to change their way of living; they do not want to believe what they read in the Bible, for the Bible condemns their manner of life; they are under the condemnation of God because they love darkness rather than light. They deliberately choose to remain in the dark, rather than turn to the light of God's Word. Our Saviour writes of such in John 3 : 19 and 20 : "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

People who refuse to give God's Word a proper test are rebels against God because they will not use the means He has provided for them : they cannot claim that they wish to remain neutral, for they only deceive themselves all the time they refuse to use the means God is giving them. In the light of the coming eternity, is it not wiser to cease your rebellion against God and to give His Word a fair trial? Here is a great message for agnostics and infidels from the lips of Christ in John 7 : 17 : "If any man will do (is willing to do) His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."

May all my readers be willing to do God's will on this matter : if a man is willing, our Lord says, there is no doubt of the issue, "he shall know."

So much, then, for this brief and very limited survey of the past fulfilment of prophecy.

Someone may say : "What is all this fuss about an old book like the Bible? If what you have written is true, it only proves the truth of a certain amount of past history. It may interest those who like to delve into the past; but all this has no significance for us who live in this practical twentieth century; the Bible is a musty old book dealing with events which took place very long ago, and it has nothing to say about present-day life. It is antiquated, old-fashioned in its ideas, and completely out of date."

Do any of my readers honestly think this? If you do, Part 2 of this book is definitely for you. The Bible out of date? Why, it is more up to date than the newspaper on your breakfast table. It has a great deal to say about events which are taking place in the world today. If you will not heed the past fulfilment of prophecy it may be that the many prophecies which are being fulfilled today will deeply interest you and cause you to turn with fresh interest to the most wonderful Book of the ages; the writer much hopes that this will be so.

Part 2.

THE PRESENT FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

It gave the writer a great thrill when he realised for the first time that the Bible is an up-to-date book, and that it has a great deal to say about the state of the world in the closing years of this dispensation and also about the Divine intervention which is to take place in the world when the Son of God returns in power and great Glory as the Bible says He will.

This second part is written to try and prove that many wonderful events which are taking place today have been foretold in the Bible. Let us go back for a moment to the occasion in the Gospels when, in the early days of our Lord's ministry, He came to the town of Nazareth where He had been brought up, and so was very well known by all the people. Our Lord went into their synagogue on the Sabbath day and during the service He stood up to read the Scriptures. He was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He found the place He wanted to read. In our Bibles of today which are now divided into chapters, the passage which He turned to was Chapter 61 : verse 1 : "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," and there He stopped reading. He closed the roll, and gave it again to the minister and sat down. Everyone present waited with great expectancy to what He would say next, and then He came out with this astounding utterance : "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." He is definitely making the claim before them that the One who is now speaking to them is their long-looked-for Messiah, and that He had now begun to fulfil this very ancient prophecy written 800 years before that day. It must indeed have been a thrilling moment

when they saw their ancient Scriptures having their fulfilment before their very eyes. It must also give a great thrill to many today when they discover for the first time that over a number of passages written a very long time ago it can be truly said : "This day is this Scripture being fulfilled before your eyes." It is of great interest to compare these times in which we now live with our Lord's days on earth.

After four centuries of comparative silence between the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first coming of our Lord, suddenly prophecy after prophecy begins to have its fulfilment culminating in the very many predictions about our Lord's trial and death. We have only to read St. Matthew's Gospel to see how often there was some fulfilment of prophecy at the time of our Lord's first coming. Now that we seem to be rapidly approaching the great events connected with our Lord's second coming, it is of great interest to notice that once again great predictions of the past are having their fulfilment today. How it should stir our hearts to see them, and to realise that the Bible is not the musty out-of-date book which some people seem to think it is, but is right up-to-date, and is vibrating with life and power. So let us turn our thoughts to some of the wonderful predictions in many different parts of the Bible which are being fulfilled before our eyes.

Before considering some of the predictions in the Bible which are being fulfilled before our eyes in the world today, let us face up to three objections which some people may have against the idea of there being anything miraculous about them.

Some may say : "There is nothing extraordinary about these prophecies; the prophets only predicted things which were likely to take place." Now, is this a fair criticism? The writer maintains that it is not. With regard to the return of the Jews to their own land, no one could possibly regard it as a likely thing that a nation cast out of their own land and dispersed among the other nations of the world for nearly nineteen centuries should at the end of that long period still retain their own nationality, and still be a separate and distinct people. That the Jewish people

have not been absorbed into the nations where they have been scattered for such a long time but still remain a distinct people is one of the miracles of history, and is not something which could be thought probable. Again, could it be considered likely that a nation punished and dispersed in this way would after more than eighteen centuries become so united again that such a great number should return to the land which they once possessed and be acknowledged by the other nations as "The State of Israel"? This is indeed something which would not only be considered unlikely, but many would have thought it impossible, and yet we have seen it take place in the last forty years; and the Bible foretold very definitely, as we shall see, that they would return to their land and become once more a united nation.

The other line of prophecies mainly deal with the terrible state of the world in the last time. Again, who would have thought it probable that after all these centuries for God's servants to proclaim His message of mercy and peace to the nations, the world should witness two such devastating world wars as we have had in our own generation? Even up to 1914 the prevalent idea was that the world was getting better and better, and that we were hastening on to a time of prosperity and peace for the nations when there should be no more war. It was a lovely picture, a golden age brought about by the upward trend of humanity, and many firmly believed it was coming to pass, until their Utopian hopes were completely shattered by the first world war. What did seem improbable to so many was that in the advance of civilisation in the 20th century nations would resort to force of arms to settle their international disputes. Yet the Bible had foretold what seemed improbable; and what the Bible predicted has come to pass. No! such a criticism is not fair. The Word of God foretold in its pages most unlikely things, and we have seen them come to pass.

What a convincing proof these things give us of the accuracy and reliability of Holy Scripture.

The second objection made by some is that many of these predictions concerning the Jewish people and their

return to their own country were fulfilled when a remnant returned after the Babylonian captivity, and that it is absurd to make them refer to a return at the close of this present age. To this we would answer that so many of these wonderful predictions concerning the return of the Jews to their own land are linked up with events which never took place on their return from Babylon. One instance of this is found in Jeremiah, Ch. 30. In verse 3 we read: "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Now in this passage without any break it goes on to speak of a day of terrible trouble coming for Israel; verses 5 and 8, "For thus saith the Lord; we have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . . . Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds." These things never took place on their return from Babylon. This unique day of trouble foretold through Jeremiah is also mentioned by Daniel where this day is connected with a great deliverance and a day of resurrection. See Daniel 12: 1 and 2. "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." This colossal day of trouble has obviously not yet come, but the return of the Jews foretold by Jeremiah in the above passage is taking place before our eyes, and people who cannot see that we are approaching a time of intense tribulation for the world must be blind.

If my readers will take the trouble to read carefully Ezekiel, Ch. 36 to 39, they will see that the return of the Jews which is taking place now is to lead on to a time of conversion to God and of great spiritual blessing for the whole nation, and the Gentile nations are to know that God has sanctified Israel. (See especially Ezekiel 36: 21

to 28.) This restoration of the Jewish nation to God's favour has not yet taken place. Their blindness, rebellion and punishment has continued with little respite from the days of Jeremiah to the present time; but their approaching tribulation will lead to a glorious day of national emancipation and spiritual restoration such as they have never experienced since they became a nation.

Again in Psalm 102 : 16 we read, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." Here we see clearly that the restoration to God's favour of the Jewish people and their future greatness will be at the time when our Lord appears in His glory. He appeared in His humanity nineteen hundred years ago; but we still await the triumph of that day when He shall come in great majesty and glory. There are many other passages in the Old Testament which reveal the same teaching that the return of the Jews is linked with a time of intense world trouble, with the coming back again of our Lord Jesus to set up His kingdom, and with that change of heart which is yet to be experienced by the whole Jewish nation.

Surely these facts are a sufficient answer to this second objection.

The third objection which may be made to these predictions which follow is "These verses which are chosen to try and prove the point of prophecies which are being fulfilled in our own day, are culled from the very different passages from the Bible and some seem to be taken out of their context, and in many cases no hint is made that the writer is leaping across the centuries to this present time, and such an interpretation as yours seems fanciful and hardly possible."

In trying to answer this objection, the writer would point out that if the context is carefully studied it will be found that most of the texts quoted are not taken out of their context, but the passage containing the text is dealing with events which have not yet taken place but are to have their fulfilment at the close of this age. Again, if we study the prophecies concerning our Lord's first coming which have had their definite and accurate fulfilment during His ministry in Palestine, we shall have to admit that these

predictions are found in most unlikely passages which seemed to have no reference to the coming of the Messiah. Take for example the prophecy of our Lord's sufferings on the Cross in Psalm 22. We have the statement in verse 16, "They pierced My hands and My feet." Surely if anyone had said in David's day that this was a prophecy of the Messiah who was to appear on earth a thousand years after the prophecy was written, they would have been laughed to scorn. Or Psalm 69 : 21, "They gave me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." There is no indication in this Psalm that the writer is referring to the coming Saviour and that the fulfilment of this text leaps forward a thousand years; but it was so. In that great prediction given through Isaiah in chapter 9 : 6 and 7, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder . . . of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Who would have thought in Isaiah's day that the opening part of verse 6 would have its fulfilment 800 years after it was written, and that the second part dealing with our Lord seated upon the throne of David and administering judgment and justice would have to wait for its fulfilment for at least another nineteen hundred years; for we still await the day of our Lord's Kingdom when justice will be meted out to the Jews and to all nations. If the prophecies concerning our Lord's first coming leap across the centuries without any indication that there would be such long intervals of time before the different parts of one prophecy would have their fulfilment, should we not expect that in many passages dealing with future events we should find little indication that the fulfilment of them would leap across many hundreds of years to that surpassingly wonderful time when our Lord shall return in great power and glory to judge the nations and to set up His Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

We would ask that the answers to these objections might be carefully considered by those who would make them.

PROPHECIES WHICH ARE BEING FULFILLED TODAY.

First let us consider some of the

A. Predictions Concerning International Affairs.

1. The upheaval of all nations.

Haggai 2 : 7, "I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come." There are many predictions in the Old Testament which foretell a great upheaval of the nations at the end of this age. In the last forty years we have witnessed revolution and intense trouble coming upon nation after nation—Russia, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Spain, Turkey, India, Persia, Kenya, China, Japan, Tibet, Malaya, etc. These two world wars in one generation have brought terrible distress upon millions of the people of the world and most nations have suffered very acutely. In Luke 21 : 25 our Lord spoke of this time of unique trouble as one of the great signs of His near return in Glory when He said: "There shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity." We have most certainly experienced world-wide trouble among the nations in the last forty years.

2. The shaking of the sea and dry land.

Haggai 2 : 6 For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land."

In these two world wars country after country have had their lands terribly shaken by the falling of bombs. Battles raging at sea have caused great explosions on the waters and beneath them through torpedo attacks by submarines. In addition to all this there are now taking place the constant testing of nuclear bombs in far distant parts of the world which cause terrific upheaval on land and on sea. When our Lord spoke in the Gospels of the great

distress of the nations in the last days, He added in Luke 21 : 25 : "The sea and the waves roaring." Are not these predictions being fulfilled in our own day ?

3. World-wide war.

Through God's Word to Jeremiah in Ch. 25 : 29 to 33, we find a prediction of a coming World War. "I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth," saith the Lord of Hosts. "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword," saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, "Behold evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth." Never before 1914 had the nations experienced a world-wide war. But these two terrible world wars in which we have participated are in complete agreement with the prophecy of Jeremiah.

4. Destruction by fire.

In the very next verse Jeremiah writes "Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock : for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished."

One of the awful results of modern warfare is the widespread destruction of property through fire; huge and costly buildings reduced to rubble and ashes through the fires caused by incendiary bombs.

"Wallow yourselves in the ashes"; how very suggestive this is of those who lived in the chief cities of Germany towards the end of World War II. So many of their towns became full of rubble and ashes.

5. The inability of Hitler and his generals to escape.

After referring to wallowing in the ashes, the next verse of this remarkable chapter describing a great world war, verse 35, records the inability of the leaders and of their chief to escape. Verse 35 reads thus : "And the shepherds

shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape." For the German leaders and for Hitler himself at the end of World War II there was literally no way of escape. The Germans were hemmed in on both sides. On the West the allied Forces were swiftly advancing upon them, and on the East the Russian armies were attacking Berlin. Had the Germans only had one army to face they could have escaped on the other side: but the position was such that no escape was possible; Hitler finding no way of escape put an end to his wicked life, and his generals were forced to surrender.

6. The overthrow of crowns and kingdoms.

God says in Haggai 2: 22: "I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen (Nations); and I will overthrow the chariots and those that ride in them, and their riders shall come down everyone by the sword of his brother."

I suppose this generation in which we live has witnessed more people killed through warfare than any previous generation.

We have certainly seen the overthrow of many crowns and kingdoms. From 1914 to 1921 twenty-four thrones in the world collapsed and vanished away.

7. Great preparation for war in the last days.

In the prophecy of Joel, Ch. 3, we are brought right up to the end of this present age to the time when God will dwell in Jerusalem and the Jews will be converted. Much of the chapter seems to be concerned with the final events of this present age. In verse 9 we read: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong."

This passage would seem to indicate that at the end of the age there would come an urgent call to the nations to make great preparations for war: this is exactly what is happening in our own day. At tremendous cost the nations

are feverishly creating new and devastating weapons and piling up their atom bombs for a day of terrible slaughter.

8. Signs in the heavenly bodies.

Our Lord foretold that just prior to His second Advent there would be signs in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars. (Luke 21: 25.) After the first world war the attention of the public was drawn by astronomers to strange happenings in the heavens. Huge sun-spots were reported in our daily papers; we were informed that the moon had gone twelve miles out of her course, and no astronomer was able to give any reason for this; but the fact remains that Naval charts had to be altered to prevent accidents to our shipping.

It is thought by many that the terrible earthquakes all over the world which took place in 1927 and 1928 were probably caused by the strange happenings in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. It may be that before the end we shall see far greater changes in the heavens than we have seen thus far; but certainly we have seen signs in the heavens.

9. No solution found to world problems.

When our Lord gave to us one of the great signs of His coming in Luke 21: 25 that "There shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations," He added the words "With perplexity"; in the Greek the word for these two English words literally means "With no way out." In other words our Lord states that the problems of the last days would be of such a magnitude that no solution would be found to them. The popular author Mr. H. G. Wells just before he died wrote his last book, a very pessimistic one, entitled "Mind at the end of its tether." In the first chapter he wrote as follows:—"If his (the author's) thinking has been sound, then this world is at the end of its tether. The end of everything we call life is close at hand and cannot be evaded. The writer is convinced that there is no way out or round or through the impasse. It is the end." (Page 4). It is interesting that Mr. Wells should use exactly the same phrase about the problems which face the world today as

our Lord used to describe world events immediately prior to His Second Coming. There is 'no way out.' No one can find a solution to the world problems of today. This is surely one of the reasons why our Lord is coming the second time: He is coming to do what man has so clearly shown he is unable to do himself. The government of the nations is going to be upon His shoulder, and He will rule the nations with a rod of iron (Isaiah 9: 6 and Revelation 19: 15).

10. Great fear would grip the minds of people.

In Luke's Gospel, Ch. 21, Our Lord after giving the sign of His Coming that there would be great distress of nations with no solution to the world's problems, goes on to speak of great depression of spirit through the fear which would grip men's hearts as they looked out on the future. He said in verse 26: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great Glory."

Certainly there is fear in every part of the world today owing to the colossal destruction and suffering which must take place should a world atom war take place. Still we go on piling up the atom bombs which can wipe out the greatest cities of the world as we know them today. Many people think that the words "The powers of heaven shall be shaken" refer to the terrific effect of atom-bomb warfare. Whether this be so we know not, but the writer does believe that our Lord was describing in a very few words the condition of world affairs as we see them today; so that the very things He foretold 1,900 years ago are taking place in the world at this present time.

11. The world would be in grave danger of being destroyed.

In Matthew's Gospel, Ch. 24, verse 21, our Lord foretells a time of intense trouble which was to come upon the world, "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever

shall be." Some commentators believe that this was fulfilled at the terrible siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; where the sufferings of the Jews were indeed of an appalling character, but it would seem impossible to limit the application of this great prediction to that particular time, because in Daniel Ch. 12, verse 1, we read of a similar colossal trouble which is to come upon the world at the close of this age, for Daniel connects this future tribulation with a time when many shall rise from the dead; and he assures us very implicitly that at that period of intense trouble there will come a deliverance for all those whose names will be found written in the Book. This Book is presumably the Book of Life which is mentioned in Revelation 20: 15. This is what Daniel writes at the opening of the 12th chapter:—"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Both these times of trouble are described as unique in the world's history, and so some think that they both refer to the trouble which comes at the end of this age. But very possibly our Lord looking out across the centuries from the time He was speaking sees as it were two great mountain peaks of coming judgments, the first upon the Jews in A.D. 70 and the second at the close of this present age when God's severe judgments will come upon Jews and Gentiles.

There are many other passages in the Old Testament which foretell great and unique judgments which will come from God at the time when God intervenes once again for the salvation of the world.

If we think again of what Christ said about this coming tribulation we find Him saying in the very next verse, Matthew 24: 22, "And except those days should be short-

ened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Here our Lord indicates that the destruction of life at this coming period of suffering for the world will threaten the utter extinction of the lives of all who are then living on the earth, that unless the days of destruction are shortened no person would remain alive. Many have wondered in the past how the whole world could ever be threatened by such a colossal calamity; but now that these terrible atomic weapons have been invented and are being made by the nations in such large quantities and in such feverish haste, everyone who has any imagination can surely visualise the overwhelming destruction which threatens the whole world.

Reference has already been made to the last book H. G. Wells wrote shortly before his death, "Mind at the end of its tether." In his third chapter entitled "There is no pattern of things to come," the first paragraph is as follows: "Our universe is not merely bankrupt; there remains no dividend at all. It has not simply liquidated, it is going clean out of existence, leaving not a wrack behind. The attempt to trace a pattern of any sort is absolutely futile."

So here we find a very popular author of this generation in entire agreement with the words expressed by our Saviour over 1,900 years ago, that the world would be in grave danger of being destroyed at the end of this age. Mr. Wells was not a believer in the Christian Faith, and so he cannot be regarded as being prejudiced in favour of the predictions in the Bible; yet from his keen observation of the trend of world events he reached the same conclusion which our Lord had foretold so long ago.

12. Russia would rise to the front as a leading nation.

There are many students of prophecy who have long taught that Russia is the power from the North which leads many nations in the attack on Israel in the last days as foretold in Ezekiel, Chs. 38 and 39. As far back as 1888 a very keen prophetic student, Walter Scott, wrote as follows in "The Prophetic News":—"Russia is evidently destined to become the master of Asia. Her frontier line

across Asia will be 5,000 miles in length. It is well known that the Russian policy is one of steady aggression not only in Europe but in Asia, and probably the most ambitious and grasping of modern kingdoms, the most faithless in public honour and treaty engagement, the character ascribed to her in the prophetic Scriptures . . . Russia has for ages meditated on the conquest of Asia and India and China. Great Britain, with the United States, stands face to face with this Russian power, and these two sides will come into one final awful struggle." The above words were written from the author's knowledge of the Bible nearly 30 years before the Russian revolution, when this great nation was a backward and slumbering people.

13. Russia would prepare herself for the final struggle.

In Ezekiel Ch. 38 after mentioning this leading Northern nation and the other nations which are united with her we read in verse 7:—"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."

It is well known to the whole world that Russia has been making very great preparation for world conquest. It was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of July 8th, 1957, thus:—"The Soviet Army may be better equipped than all other armies, says the United States Army Information Digest in its latest issue. It was the only major force with a completely new arsenal capable of fighting a big or small nuclear or non-nuclear war in any climate or terrain."

14. Russia would aim at the conquest of the Middle East.

Ezekiel Ch. 38 is quite clear as to the country which is to be attacked by this Northern nation: it is the land of Israel. In verses 8 to 12 we read this about this power from the North:—"In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm . . . and all thy bands, and many people with thee . . . Thou

shalt say, I will go up the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst (Hebrew 'navel') of the land."

It is plain from these verses that the objective of this Northern army is the Mountains of Israel; that the land which is invaded has for a long time been waste and desolate, but is now inhabited; that the people now living in Israel have been gathered out of the nations; that these people now possess cattle and goods; that they dwell confidently (verse 11, Margin); that they are dwelling in cities without walls and gates; and that they dwell in the "navel" of the land. All these facts picture the State of Israel as she is today. The last feature is of great interest. The land possessed by the people of Israel today is only a small part of the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed. Genesis 15: 18. But it lies in the centre of Palestine at the time when this attack takes place, and that is the position of the State of Israel at this present time. Today we have great indications that Russia has her eye on the Middle East, and is even now preparing for the day when her attack will take place.

Lord Home, as Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, gave this information to the House of Lords on May 1st, 1957, according to the representative of the *Daily Telegraph*: "As regards supplies of Communist arms to Egypt and Syria, as is now generally known, Egypt had received from the Soviet bloc by the end of October, 1956, military equipment to the estimated value of between £120 million and £150 million. Similarly, Syria, by the same date, had received military equipment to the value of about £20 million. The equipment supplied covered the entire range of Egypt's and Syria's military requirements, including naval vessels and aircraft, tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery, small arms, motor vehicles and ancillary equipment, together with ammunition and spare parts."

Lieut.-General Sir John Glubb, until recently the Commander of the Arab Legion, wrote a very illuminating article in one of our daily papers in which he states: "The ideal solution for a military commander must be to preposition his heavy material in the foreign country in peace time. The troops to man the weapons can be flown out in a matter of hours. Russia has now produced a technique which is a variation of the same theme. It is the "sale" of heavy weapons to some small country. Under guise of such an arms deal, heavy Russian war material can be prepositioned in a foreign country. A few of the weapons are actually issued to the army concerned. Russian experts can be placed to look after the material, under the guise of instructors. But the real object is to store heavy weapons for use by the Russian Army itself, whenever an excuse can be found to fly the personnel into the area. All that remains to be done is to find such an excuse. In the present case, the Arab-Israel conflict has been chosen for the purpose. Everything must be done by Russia to provoke hostilities between Israel on the one hand and Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the other. When hostilities begin, Egypt or Syria (where the Russian arms are already sited) appeal to foreign volunteers. The Russian Army flies in, just as Chinese "volunteers" intervened in Korea. Within a few hours a complete Soviet Army, with tanks, guns, and aircraft has occupied another country in a vital strategic area."

Sir John Glubb and many other people have no doubt as to the intentions of Russia; they believe that Russia is aiming at the conquest of the Middle East. The revelation from God concerning this attack on Israel by a Northern power at the end of the Times of the Gentiles was given to the prophet Ezekiel over 2,500 years ago, and we can clearly see the preparations which are being made for that attack today.

15. Russia would include in her armies the people of many other nations.

In Ezekiel Ch. 38 we learn that this Northern power brings down with her armies the people of many other

countries. Various other countries are named in verses 5 and 6. Also we read in verse 9 :—"Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee."

This verse seems to picture an air attack, her planes darkening the sky like a storm, and like a cloud in the heavens covering the land. But the point before us is this : she attacks Israel with the help of many other nations. Now it is a well-known fact that since the Russian revolution of 1917, she has been aiming to bring other nations under her control and to force upon them her Communitistic ideals. We have witnessed country after country conquered and dominated by the Communists of Russia, so that today these various satellite nations are forced to do her bidding and to fight on her behalf if she calls upon them to do so. So again we find that what is likely to happen in the near future in the general set-up of Russia and the Middle East is predicted in the Bible in much accurate detail. This Northern power is depicted as having many other nations with her.

Among these nations named in Ezekiel we find Persia, Ethiopia and Lybia. It may be argued that these nations are not under the power and influence of Russia today; but if we have gauged the situation rightly it is certain that they will be on Russia's side on the day when this great attack on Israel does take place.

16. Great efforts would be made at the end time to preserve the peace and safety of the world.

When Paul is writing to the Christians at Thessalonika about the end of this age and the Coming of our Lord he reveals some very interesting details as to what is going to take place. He tells them very clearly that it is no guess work on his part, that these things are not his own idea or his own opinion; but he says in Ch. 4, verse 15; "This we say unto you by the Word of the Lord." He claims that what he writes to them on this subject is a direct revelation from God. Notice what he writes in Ch. 5: 1 to 4: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves

know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say 'peace and safety'; then cometh sudden destruction upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." "The Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." The Saviour will come when the world is in moral and spiritual darkness—at night-time, when the world is slumbering and dreaming about these many wonderful inventions now taking place. Suddenly He will come as a thief to take away from the earth to Himself a treasure which He supremely values because He gave His very life to win it, His Church, His own redeemed people, purchased with His precious Blood. He said to His own disciples just before His crucifixion "I will come again and receive *you* unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14: 3. In Malachi 3: 16 and 17 we read "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." How dearly the Lord must love those who belong to Him on this earth, and how wonderful it will be for them on that day when the Lord comes to make up His jewels, and to spare those who have entered into Covenant relationship with Him. But this is a digression from the matter before us. The principal purpose in quoting this passage is to shew that at the end-time, when a sudden destruction is about to come upon the world, men will be talking about peace and safety: in other words, frantic efforts will be made to preserve the peace and safety of the world at the very time when overwhelming trouble and destruction will burst upon the nations.

Ever since the First World War there have been a great many international conferences and new organisations have

come into being with one object in view, the safety of the world by the prevention of war. It started with the formation of The League of Nations after World War I; conference after conference was held in a great effort to bind the nations together and to stop war; however, as we well know, their efforts did not meet with success, and our politicians were unable to prevent World War II. Since this last terrible conflict against the Nazis, tremendous efforts have been made by our leaders and the leaders of other countries to preserve the peace of the world; in spite of all the many conferences which are still taking place to save the world from the grave disaster which threatens the nations, we see the world divided into two great armed camps, and both sides are continually spending colossal sums of money in creating new and ever deadlier weapons. We are witnessing today the rapid approach of fearful calamity which might break forth at any time; at the same time we witness continual attempts being made to save the world from destruction by statesmen who visualise the appalling dangers which threaten the nations.

Both these aspects of the present situation are brought before us in I Thessalonians 5 : 3. "For when they shall say 'Peace and safety' then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Here we find another great Bible prophecy which is having its accurate fulfilment worked out before our eyes today.

The Bible is very clear on the point that a time of tremendous trouble is to come upon the nations at the close of this age, which, by the way, is not the end of the world as some might think, but the end of this present dispensation, when after great judgments God will usher in the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Lord foretells this time of trouble in Matthew 24 : 21 when He says: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Daniel writes of this same time in Ch. 12 : 1. Isaiah writes of it in Ch. 26 : 20 and 21 : "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut

thy doors about thee : hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Jeremiah foresees it in Ch. 30 : 23 and 24. "Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind : It shall fall with pain (Or R.V. 'It shall burst') upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until He have done it, and until He has performed the intents of His heart : in the latter days ye shall consider it." Zephaniah writes of it in Ch. 3 : 8 : "Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey : for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour out upon them My indignation, even all My fierce anger : for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy."

There are many other passages which deal with God's anger with the nations at the close of this age which any Bible student can discover for himself. This explains why the politicians and statesmen of the world have not met with success in their great efforts for "Peace and Safety." The "League of Nations" appear to have left God out completely. In all these peace conferences no attempt is made to acknowledge the supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has been given by God a Name which is above every name : the One whom men have crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ; and the Bible tells us that God has given Him all authority in Heaven and in earth. There can be no peace and safety for the world until all over the earth men and women acknowledge the supremacy and Lordship of Christ. Someone may say "It will take a very long time for the Gospel to be preached before such a mighty transformation as this could take place." That the world will undergo a tremendous moral and spiritual change can clearly be seen in God's programme for the future as it is revealed in the prophetic Scriptures. We read in Isaiah Ch. 11 : 9 "The earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Also in

Psalm 72 : 8 and 11, a Psalm which foretells the coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus to be set up on this earth, we read :—"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him : all nations shall serve Him." In Zechariah 14 : 9 :—"And the Lord shall be King over the whole earth : in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one." How is this great transformation going to be brought about? Not by the preaching of the Gospel, as so many have taught, but by the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ to execute judgments on His enemies, to deliver Israel from her foes, to set up His kingdom, and to rule the nations with a rod of iron. To spiritualise these great prophecies, is to rob them of their plain meaning, to do grave injustice to God's revelation, and to make the plain prophecies of the Bible a mockery.

We must come back to the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, and acknowledge that however unlikely it may seem to unbelievers that God is going to intervene in the history of the world by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Glory, yet it is most clearly revealed in the Book of books, in the Book which has proved itself to be inspired by God by its many prophecies which have already been fulfilled. Here we must close this first section of Part 2 which deals with many of the predictions of the Bible concerning international affairs, prophecies which were made many long centuries ago concerning striking events which were to take place at the close of this age, and which are now being fulfilled before our eyes.

Perhaps, if we seek to summarise them, we shall be more inclined to admit the wonder of these predictions and to marvel at the inspiration of this Divine book which contains such proof of its Divine authorship. These are some of the things foretold in God's Word about international affairs at the end of this age.

It foretells the upheaval of all nations, the shaking of the sea and the dry land; world-wide war; destruction by fire; the inability of leaders to escape; the overthrow of crowns and kingdoms; the preparation for war in the last days; signs in the heavenly bodies; no solution found to

world problems; great fear would grip the minds of people; the world would be in grave danger of being destroyed; Russia would rise to the front as a leading nation; Russia would prepare herself for the final struggle; Russia would aim at the conquest of the Middle East; Russia would include in her armies the people of many other nations; great efforts would be made at the end time to preserve the peace and safety of the world.

These are some of the international signs given to us in the Word of God concerning the end of this present age : none of them were in existence fifty years ago, but every one of them are being fulfilled before our eyes today. Do not these things provide very clear evidence that the Bible is more than a human book; that it is indeed the inspired Word of God? Do not they also prove that we are living in the closing days of this present age, and that we can now expect the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory according to the oft-repeated promises in the Bible that He will come again at a time of great world trouble.

Let us now turn to another series of Bible Prophecies which are being fulfilled today :

B. Predictions concerning the Jewish People.

As we study these intensely interesting prophecies about God's ancient people, the Jews, we shall see that it is only in these latter days that we have seen their fulfilment. Also these predictions which we are now going to consider are not the kind which would seem likely to be fulfilled; in fact, on the face of it, they are of such a nature that it would seem most unlikely that they could ever come to pass; and yet what has seemed so improbable has taken place in our own day.

Let us now consider some of the more important prophecies concerning Israel.

1. The nation of Israel would come to Life again.

Since the time of their destruction and dispersion among the Gentiles by the Roman armies, the Jews, who have

been scattered over the face of the world, have suffered acutely in all lands where they had fled for refuge. It is indeed a miracle of history that they have never been absorbed by the nations where they have dwelt: all down the Christian centuries they have retained their distinctive national characteristics and yet at the same time they have enjoyed no national unity. They have been downtrodden and hated by the Gentile nations and have been unable to defend themselves against the very severe persecutions which they have been forced to endure at the hands of their enemies.

It looked as if it would be quite impossible for this despised and persecuted people ever to regain that national unity and prosperity which they had once enjoyed. But the Bible has clearly foretold that this seemingly dead nation was to come to life again.

In Ezekiel Ch. 37 the prophet is given the vision of the valley of dead bones. The Lord says to the prophet in verse 11 "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, our bones are dried and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

So we have no doubt as to what is meant by these dead bones; nor are we left in any doubt as to what is the purpose of God for their future. God's obvious intention is to revive the nation of Israel, to bring the people back into their own land, and to put His Spirit into them. We find the Lord asking Ezekiel "Can these bones live?" Apart from the power of God, it is quite impossible for dead bones to put on a new life. So apart from the power of God it is quite impossible for this dead nation to put on a new life. But we find the Lord saying to Ezekiel

"Prophesy upon these bones and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." Ezekiel now prophesies as the Lord commanded him, and he records what took place thus:—"As I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, "Prophesy unto the wind, (margin 'breath') prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God; 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

We do well to notice that this great reviving of a nation takes place in two parts. First there is the coming to life again of the nation, which is followed by the sinews, flesh and skin coming upon the nation. This is the first part of the Divine programme: then comes the second part, the breath coming into them and thus making the nation an exceeding great army.

The first part seems to speak of the people becoming a nation once more, and putting on a measure of success and prosperity and strength which is surely indicated by the skin, flesh and sinews; but all this happens while they are still in a state of spiritual death, for it is not until the breath of a new spiritual life comes into them that they become an army for God.

For quite a number of years we have been witnessing the people of Israel fulfilling the first part of this great prophecy. They have come together as a nation in a truly remarkable way and have already shewn to the world a prosperity and strength which has been startling in the rapidity with which it has been brought about. But all

this has been accomplished in a state of unbelief; and they still await the day which we cannot help feeling is near at hand, when, as a nation, they will turn to Christ and acknowledge our Lord as their Saviour and Messiah, and then the breath of His Spirit will come into them and they will then become a mighty force for God in the world in the Messianic Kingdom which our Lord will establish when He comes to reign.

The Jewish renaissance has now been in evidence since about the beginning of this century. During this time they have indeed put on a new life as a nation: for 2,500 years Israel has been without a king or ruler of any kind; for many long centuries she has had no flag, no capital, no rallying centre, no national organisation; she has just been a broken, persecuted people without a national home of their own. But now a great transformation has taken place. Israel has now been aroused from her long slumber, and the nation which seemingly was so dead and hopeless has put on a new life. The movement had its beginning in the Zionist organisation which held its first Congress in Switzerland in 1897. In the first world war, as a result of the very valuable service rendered to our nation by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Russian Jew, who had lived in England twenty-five years, the Jews were offered a national home in Palestine in 1917. This opened the way for nearly 2,000,000 Jews to return since that year to the land that God gave to their fathers and, through great zeal and determination on the part of this awakened nation, they have been building up their Zionist organisation, so that now they are acknowledged by the Council of the United Nations as "The State of Israel."

This is indeed a most remarkable achievement and is one of the miracles of history. In 1915 Mr. J. F. Fraser wrote a book entitled "The Conquering Jew": in it he writes as follows:—"I know of no country, and I have roamed the world much, where the unfettered Jew with his wits in contest with the wits of other people, does not get ahead . . . The Jewish renaissance is scarcely more than twenty years old, but is making its influence felt in Jewish communities in every part of the world."

Referring back to the vision God gave to Ezekiel; truly there has been a noise, the world upheaval of the first World War; through that war the Jews were brought together in a wonderful way; and since their return to their own land, they have been putting on flesh and sinews according to the prophecy given in that chapter, making a wonderful progress in so many departments of their national life, so much so that the Gentile nations have marvelled at the prosperity and strength which have attended their efforts. Now it is of great interest to see that our Lord Jesus in His talk to His disciples about the time when He should return in His glory also depicts a new life coming to the Jewish people at the end of this age. More than once He uses the fig tree as an emblem of His own nation. He very plainly does this in one of His parables recorded in Luke 13: 6 to 9, where we find Him saying:—"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, 'Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' And he answering said unto him, 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'"

Our Lord in this parable is clearly speaking about His own nation. He had worked miracles in their midst for three years, teaching them continually their need of repentance, and still they have not responded to His appeals: He now warns them that in a very short time He will make a yet greater effort to turn them to Himself, referring it would seem to His approaching death and resurrection: and if after that further proof of His love for His nation, they still remain unrepentant, God's judgments would come upon them as a nation. So here in this story He is using a fig tree as an emblem of the Jewish people.

Again, on a later occasion, shortly before His trial and death, we find our Lord putting a curse on a barren fig tree, and His disciples notice when next they pass that place that the tree has withered away. Here it seems that

our Lord in this parabolic act is pronouncing a withering curse upon His nation.

History has indeed confirmed the solemn words spoken by our Lord. Even after Pentecost, though many Jews did acknowledge the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Messiah, yet the nation as a whole still rejected Him, and despised God's gracious offer to them; so in A.D. 70 God's judgments came upon the Jewish people when the Roman armies came against them. After terrible bloodshed and ghastly sufferings the resistance of the Jews was overcome and those who escaped being put to death were driven out of their land and dispersed among the Gentile nations by whom they have been hated and persecuted all down the Christian era. Truly, the curse pronounced by our Lord on the fruitless fig tree has been evident in their history ever since they were expelled from their land right up to our own times.

In both these cases the fig tree is used by our Lord to represent His nation. Now let us turn to the passage where our Lord is teaching His disciples about His return in glory at the close of this present age. He tells them in Matthew 24 : 30 and 31 that the day is coming when they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And the angels shall be sent to gather together His chosen ones. Immediately after making this announcement He says :—"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (R.V. 'He') is near, even at the doors."

Here our Lord is speaking of a fig tree, after its dead winter, putting on a new life once more; and He is surely using the fig tree once again as an emblem of the Jewish nation, and is indicating that the long dead winter of their barren existence is going to come to an end. The nation which has been under the curse of God for so many centuries is to put on a new life, and that this new life will be the proof that the return of our Lord is very near, and that the longed-for summer of the world, when all will be bright and fair, is close at hand.

The Psalmist foretells the same wonderful happenings when he says in Psalm 102 : 16, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory."

These passages which we have been considering plainly teach that at the end of this age the Jewish people are to come to life again as a nation; and as today we are witnessing the upspringing of this remarkable people, their return to the land which God gave to Abraham and to his seed, and their renewed national life in "The State of Israel" we must surely admit that prophecy concerning Israel is being fulfilled before our eyes.

Now let us consider :—

2. The land would be prepared for the people.

As a result of the sins of the Jews for despising God's ways and for rejecting His Son, the land of Palestine which was once very fertile and productive, became a barren and desolate country. This is exactly what God had foretold through Moses would happen if the nation refused to hearken to Him. We read in Leviticus 26 : 32, "I will bring the land into desolation : and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you : and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths."

How truly this has come to pass. John Urquhart in his very interesting book "The Wonders of Prophecy" produces evidence of the desolate state of Palestine before the return of the Jews.

He writes :—"Travellers speak of its desolation with positive amazement." Captain Conder refers to Judaea as "this ruined land."

Dean Stanley wrote "For miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except for the occasional goatherd on the hill-side, or gathering of women at the wells." The Rev. J. L. Porter writing about a hundred years ago concerning the land round the Lake of Galilee where once the whole country was teeming

with life and bustle and industry, said: "Not a city, not a village, not a sign of settled habitation was there except the few huts of Magdala, and the scattered houses of Tiberias. A mournful and solitary silence reigned triumphant."

So we see that God's Word has been verified in the desolation of the land which once had been so thickly populated.

But the Bible makes it clear that at the end-time the land of Palestine is to undergo a great transformation. It is once again to be tilled and sown and to become fruitful. This is what God foretold through the prophet Ezekiel over 2,500 years ago in Ch. 36: 6 to 10. "Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, thus saith the Lord God "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen": therefore thus saith the Lord God: "I have lifted up My hand, surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded." In that same chapter in verses 34 and 35 we read "And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, 'This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden.'" All who know what is taking place in the State of Israel today can bear witness to the fact that the land which was so desolate is being swiftly transformed. Swamps have been drained; the land is being tilled and sown; millions of trees have been planted; orange groves and vineyards are flourishing; the country, in an incredibly short space of time, has been transformed from an un-cared-for, idle land into one humming with activity and industry. We are seeing the Word of the living God translated into fact by the Jews before our eyes. The land is indeed being pre-

pared for the people in accordance with the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Again, we are told to expect:—

3. The Jews would return to their own land.

In modern times most of the countries of Europe have wanted to get rid of the Jews. Why is this? One of the reasons for their dislike of the Jew is that when he is in competition with Gentiles he is usually able to beat them. They have risen to the highest positions in the universities and in most of the professions. As someone has said: "The total number of Jews in the world is insignificant, but their influence in the affairs of the world is colossal." Many nations are jealous of them and afraid of them, and so would like to see them go and live elsewhere.

An attempt was made by one of our leading statesmen to find a home for the Jews somewhere in Africa, but success never attended the effort because it was not in accordance with the plan of God. It was the purpose of God that the Jews should go back to the land which He has so definitely promised to Abraham and to his seed. In Genesis 15: 18 we read of the unconditional covenant which God made with Abraham nearly 4,000 years ago. It is recorded thus: In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

As we have noted, it is an unconditional covenant; that is to say that this promise was made to Abraham by God without the requirement on God's part of any condition of obedience from Abraham. Being an unconditional promise, if our God is true and faithful to His Word, as we know He is, then this promise must have its exact fulfilment, and Abraham's seed must possess all this land from the Nile to the Euphrates. Now, except perhaps for a very short time in the reign of Solomon, Abraham's seed has never possessed anything like the full extent of this large area: so this great promise made to the father of the Jewish people still awaits its fulfilment; but knowing

the faithfulness of God we are perfectly certain that, like all God's promises, it must be translated into fact.

At present the Jews only occupy a small part of Palestine, but our God who begins a work will surely finish it.

How wonderful is that great passage in Deuteronomy 30 : 1 to 5, made 3,000 years ago. It cannot refer to the return after the Babylonish captivity, because in that captivity the Jews were taken to Babylon, and were not scattered among the Gentile nations as they were after their terrible defeat by the Romans.

Read what this very remarkable passage states :—"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee : and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

It will be clearly seen from this passage that their full return as a nation depends on their repentance and obedience to God. But it is plain from other passages of Scripture that previous to this full and complete return of the nation, there is to be a partial return of the people in a state of unbelief. For instance, we read in Ezekiel 36 : 24 and 25 another great prophecy concerning the return of the Jews at the end of this present age, as follows :—"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your

idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

Evidently there is to be a partial return of the Jews in unbelief prior to the full return of the nation later. It is that return of only some Jews to their own land which we are now witnessing, and which is a definite fulfilment of prophecy.

We cannot expect the whole nation to be saved until our Lord returns in His glory as we read in Romans 11 : 25 to 27. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

But we must see in this partial return the first step towards the mighty blessing which is yet to come upon the nation when they turn from their sins and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Messiah. So much for our third point about the prophecies concerning Israel. It is foretold in the Scriptures that they will go back to their own land : this is what we have been so thrilled to see in this generation. Over two million Jews have already gone back to the land of their fathers since 1917.

4. They would purchase the land to which they return.

Jeremiah foretells this in Ch. 32 : 43 and 44. "And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, it is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the South : for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord."

The writer is well aware of the fact that many will

regard this passage as fulfilled when the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon; but if the context is carefully studied it will be seen that it refers to their return to their land in our day. Note some of the previous verses. Verse 37, "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly (Marginal rendering:—"In stability") with My whole heart and with My whole soul. For thus saith the Lord: Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them."

God promises here that He is so going to bless His people when they return, that He will not turn from them, and they will not depart from Him. These verses cannot refer to the Babylonish return, because after that return they did depart from Him, and He did turn away from them, as history so clearly relates when the Roman armies conquered the nation, and the people were scattered among the nations for their sin. When the Lord Jesus comes in His glory, He is going to give the whole nation "one heart and one way that they may fear Him for ever" according to this prophecy.

If the purchase of the fields mentioned in the above passage refers to the return of the Jews to Palestine in our day, then it is of great interest to know that the Jews have bought land from the Arabs when they first set up their agricultural colonies in every place which is mentioned in verse 44, i.e., in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and

in the cities of the South. Here is another present-day fulfilment of prophecy.

It might well have happened that the Jews would have occupied their land again by conquest, and if this had been the case, they would never have paid the Arabs for the land which they wanted. It would have seemed more than likely that they could only go back to Palestine by force of arms, in which case no money would have been paid to the Arabs; but the Word of God had decreed that various parts of the land would be purchased by the Jews for money, seemingly a most unlikely happening; but yet it has taken place just as God declared it would. So once again we can see the Word of God proving its truthfulness before our eyes.

They were to purchase certain parts of the land when they at last began to go back. We have seen it happen.

5. They would possess the land to which they return.

At the commencement of their return the Jews did not possess any part of the land as their own; by the famous "Balfour decree" on November 2nd, 1917, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations was made by the British Government to Lord Rothschild through Mr. Arthur J. Balfour:—"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." But this declaration gave them no right to possess as a nation any land of their own. They were allowed a home in Palestine but at the same time they were not entitled to call any part of the land as their own national property. For some years the British were given the mandate for Palestine and many thousands of Jews seized their opportunity of returning to the land of their fathers; but it was not until the year 1948 that the Jews took over the control of their own affairs and announced to the world that they were now

"The State of Israel." This decisive act upon the part of Israel startled the nations of the world and has caused intense opposition from Egypt, and from the Arab nations. It was in the next year that President Truman of the United States of America recognized the Israel State. His lead was followed by Britain and the United Nations.

Shortly after President Truman's decision a shop window in London displayed a notice saying:—"Read today's news written 2,000 years ago." In the window various newspapers showed in big, black headlines "Truman recognizes Israel State," while a Bible lay open at a chapter in the book of Jeremiah, and an arrow indicated Ch. 30 : 3 for all to read. This verse states:—"For, lo, the days come," saith the Lord, "that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah," saith the Lord: "And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and *they shall possess it*."

Another passage of Scripture which foretells that the returning Jews are to possess the land is a passage to which reference has already been made, Deuteronomy 30 : 5:—"And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it." So the Jews are not merely to go back to the land which God gave to their fathers, but they are to have the land in their own possession.

At present we know that they only possess a very small portion of the large area which God has promised them; but what they now have is probably all the land that they will possess until the Lord comes in His glory. Ezekiel Ch. 38 gives an account of the future attack which is to be made on Israel from the North at a time when many of God's ancient people have gone back to their country and the desolate places are once more inhabited. It is interesting to notice in that passage in verse 12 that this people who are attacked have been gathered out of the nations, and are dwelling in the midst of the land: the marginal rendering is "that dwell in the navel of the land." This is surely an indication that when this invasion from the North does take place, the Jews will only be occupying the central part of Palestine. The writer has

heard it stated that the Lord's coming cannot possibly be close at hand because the returning Jews only possess such a small part of the land which God has promised them: but apparently from this passage we learn that it is only this little piece that they will be owning at the time when the Lord comes to save them from their enemies and to set up His kingdom. It would seem that their great expansion in the territory they possess must await the arrival of their King, the Lord Jesus; they will then be given all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates. However, what they now own is a sure sign of what God intends to do for them in the coming days.

6. The Jews are to return from all parts of the world,

but especially from the North country.

We read in Jeremiah 31 : 8 "Behold, I will bring them from the North country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth."

Why is the North country given a special mention? Surely it is because the largest number of Jews who are going back to Israel are from the North countries of Europe, and especially from Poland. The writer was struck with this fact when he was examining the statistics of the number of Jews who had returned from the various countries; the greatest number seem to have returned from the North country.

7. Jerusalem is to be set free from the down-treading oppression of the Gentile powers.

Ever since the Jews went into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, Jerusalem has been oppressed and down-trodden by various Gentile powers. At times a measure of kindness has been shewn to her by controlling Gentile kings, such as can be seen under Cyrus, King of Persia; but on the whole it must be admitted that Jerusalem has suffered greatly at the hands of her Gentile oppressors down the long centuries.

We do well to remember the words of our Lord in Luke 21 : 24 "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles,

until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Bishop Ryle comments thus on this important statement of our Lord :— "A fixed period is here foretold, during which Jerusalem was to be given over into the hands of Gentile rulers, and the Jews were to have no dominion over their ancient city. A fixed period is likewise foretold which was to be the time of the Gentiles' visitation, the time during which they were to enjoy privileges, and occupy a position something like that of Israel in ancient days . . . Both periods are one day to end. Jerusalem is to be once more restored to its ancient inhabitants. The Gentiles, because of their hardness and unbelief, are to be stripped of their privileges and endure just judgments of God." As we look on the world today we can see that great trouble is coming upon the Gentile nations at the same time as the Jews are coming to the front. This is exactly what the Scriptures foretell.

In our own days we have seen Jerusalem set free from the hand of the cruel Turk and the city under part control of the Jews. In the first World War, on December 9th, 1917, Jerusalem surrendered to General Allenby without a shot being fired on the city, and Jerusalem came for the time being under British control, and in that same year Palestine was offered to the Jews as the place to which they could go and establish a home. We cannot regard 1917 as marking the completion of the Times of the Gentiles, but we do regard it as the first stage towards the Jews obtaining full control of their own city; we can surely look upon the capture and liberation of Jerusalem in 1917 as the beginning of the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

Jerusalem is yet to be called "The city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isaiah 1 : 26). It is spoken of in Psalm 48 : 2 as "The city of the great King." Jeremiah tells us that "They shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem."

A wonderful future awaits this great and historic city when it becomes the metropolis of the whole earth. Meanwhile we can note that the Bible is being fulfilled and God's purposes for this great city's liberation and exaltation

have already begun to be worked out, and we have no doubt that still more wonderful changes are close at hand.

8. There is to be the flying of the flag of Israel and the blowing of the shophar.

In the middle of a passage which is clearly dealing with the closing events of this age we find in Isaiah 18 : 3 these words, "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." After the Jews realised the great significance of the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem in the first World War, the flag of Israel for the first time was flown from the city of Jerusalem, and the trumpet (the shophar) was blown heralding to all the Jews and to all the world the liberation of their land, and the renewed hope and aspirations of the Jewish people.

9. The Jews are to be brought back to their ancient home by two methods.

In Jeremiah Ch. 16 : 16 we read : "Behold, I will send for many fishers," saith the Lord, "And they shall fish them; and after I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."

If anyone who should be reading these words thinks that this verse is being taken out of its context and that it does not refer to the Jews being brought back to their own land, it would be well for them to read the two previous verses which reveal that this verse must refer to the return of the Jews to Palestine. The two previous verses are as follows : "Therefore, behold, the days come," saith the Lord, "that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands whither He had driven them : and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers."

So it seems that verse 16 must refer to the means which God is using in these latter days to bring back the Jews to the land which He gave to the seed of Jacob.

What then are the means which God stated so long ago that He would use? Fishing and hunting. "I will send for many fishers and they shall fish them: after will I send for many hunters and they shall hunt them," Has this been God's way of bringing the Jews back to their land? Yes, both methods have been used; first fishing, and later, hunting. The first lot of Jews were drawn back by the means of bait. A national home of their own in the land which had belonged to their fathers was dangled before them. The Zionist organization put before them the great opportunity of coming together as a nation and building together a home which would be open for all Jews and which would prove a rallying point for Jews from all parts of the world and thus enable them to become a united nation once again. Thousands of Jews were only too ready to leave their homes and to go to Palestine and to endure the greatest hardships for the sake of their future national life in their own country. But a great number of Jews who were prominent and successful business men were unwilling to make these big sacrifices which were demanded of them, and so they did not nibble at the bait which was dangled before them. They preferred to stay in the country where they were doing so well, rather than throw in their lot with those who were prepared to make such a great sacrifice. This was the line taken by prosperous Jews in countries like Germany. But then Hitler came to power in Germany, and under the Nazi regime the whole position was changed. The Jews now found themselves in a terrible plight: their shops were smashed; their goods confiscated; they were insulted, imprisoned, tortured, and millions of them were put to a vile death in a terrible way which shocked the world. It is said that under Hitler's rule six million Jews were put to death, a large number in concentration camps, and multitudes of them exterminated in gas chambers. It is no wonder that those who could do so fled for their lives; and many more Jews now found their way to the land of their fathers, not drawn there by the bait of a national home, but driven there by the terrible dangers and persecutions which threatened their lives.

So God has been true to His Word and has used this

double means to bring His nation back to Palestine; first they were drawn by the bait, and later bitter persecution drove them back: first the fishers fished them, and then the hunters hunted them.

Is not history confirming prophecy? The Bible is indeed being proved true in a day when so many are refusing to believe it. It is just as if God is saying to the world, "If you refuse to believe My Word, then I will give you still more abundant proof that it is true and reliable, and you will have no excuse whatever for your unbelief."

10. The Jews are to return to their land unwanted by the nations.

We read in the second chapter of Zephaniah and the first verse as follows: "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired." Zephaniah has been writing in the previous chapter of the coming of the great Day of the Lord. It was to be a day of wrath, of desolation, of darkness and gloominess, of clouds and thick darkness, of trumpet and alarm. The comment given on this passage by the New Bible Commentary is as follows: "There is no more vivid description of 'the Day of the Lord' than here. Doubtless, like that 'Day' spoken of by Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, and most fully of all by Joel, these prophecies were partially fulfilled in the judgments which fell on Judah and the surrounding nations of the sixth century B.C. But it must be clear that this application of the passage does not exhaust its meaning. It is not necessary for us to believe that Zephaniah's words were literally fulfilled in the consequent judgments which fell on Judah and her neighbours. Actually they were not, because they await the 'Day' when universal judgment will be visited upon all wickedness and the wrath of God be poured out upon all that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. That will be a day of wrath and weeping and distress for all the wicked." So according to the above comment, which the writer believes to be a true one, Zephaniah brings us up to the end of this age when we are to expect signs of the coming of intense trouble and when according to Zephaniah 1: 17, God is going to bring

distress upon men, "That they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord : and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung." There is terrible sin in the world today, the majority of men have no light on present-day events and so are walking blindly, and the world of our day lives in great fear of atomic warfare. What could be more descriptive of atomic warfare than the closing words of the above verse : "Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung." Immediately after writing about this terrible time of world-wide trouble which we can surely see is swiftly approaching, Zephaniah speaks of the Jews gathering themselves together in Ch. 2 : 1, "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired."

The Revised Version renders it "Gather together, O nation that hath no shame." But the Authorised Version brings out a truth which is very apparent today : There seems to be no nation that wants the Jew today. Egypt, Syria and all the Arab nations bitterly resent the Jews returning to Palestine. Other nations seem only too anxious for the Jews to leave their countries. The Jews are not desired by the Gentile nations and Jerusalem is becoming more and more what Zechariah foretold would be the case "a burdensome stone for all people." (Zechariah 12 : 3).

Yes, the Jews are to return to their land unwanted by the nations. God's predictions are found to be true, as will always be the case, in spite of the fact that infidels refuse to admit it.

11. The Jews would return to their land to face dire trouble.

This same passage to which reference has just been made goes on to speak of the severe trouble which is to come upon them following their return. This is what the whole passage records. Zephaniah 2 : 1 to 3, "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought

His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness : it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

It is quite clear from these verses that great distress still awaits the Jew after his return to his own land. One would surely surmise that as soon as they come back to their country their troubles would end; that if God is permitting them to return, then He will continue to give them increasing success and prosperity. Why then are the Jews to face such severe distress after meeting with such success up to the present time? The answer to this question lies in the fact that they are going back to their land in unbelief. They still do not acknowledge the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and their rightful King. The "Zionism" of to-day is a building without the right foundation; it is a building without Christ, and we read in I Corinthians 3 : 11, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." To try to erect a building on any other foundation is to court disaster, as the Jews will find out to their cost. We read in Psalm 127 : 1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." So the Jews are labouring in vain today; the "Zionism" of their own unbelieving efforts will not endure. When the Lord Himself builds up their Zionism, then all will be different. When the Lord returns in His glory, He will reveal Himself to His nation; He will cleanse the people from their sins and will give them a new heart to acknowledge Him as their Saviour and King, and a glorious new spiritual life will come to the whole nation. This will not take place until He returns in His Glory. Then indeed will Zionism be rebuilt by the Lord Himself and a wonderful future will be opened for the Jewish nation. So we read in Psalm 102 : 16. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." The wonderful blessings which God is preparing for the Jews await the day of our Lord's coming to save His nation.

Before that day comes we must expect the Jews to face great trouble and disaster. There seems to be a very illuminating passage on their coming distress in Isaiah 18 : 5 to 7, "For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall cut

off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountain, and to the beasts of the earth : and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them. In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts of a people scattered and peeled (Marginal rendering of verse 2 "Dragged away and peeled") and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled (R.V. 'whose land the rivers divide') to the place of the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the mount Zion." This set-back for Zionism is coming at a time when the bud is perfect. In the early stages of Zionism, the Jews have met with extraordinary success; the bud has, as it were, been perfect. In a few short years the Jews who have returned have transformed their land. Their energy and skill have given the Jews all over the world the promise of yet greater things to come. The bud speaks of the spring-time of their renewed national life; it is at such a time that disaster is coming for them. It will come when "the sour grape is ripening in the flower." The sour grape should remind us of the first signs of fruitfulness. The many vine trees which they have planted in recent years are now beginning to give promise of a marvellous vintage in the days to come. The harvest in the New Testament speaks of the end of the age. So it appears from this verse that just before this present dispensation ends, just at the time when Zionism in its early stages shews signs of wonderful promise, God is going to give these unbelieving Jews a great set-back; He shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. God is going to cut down this early growth of Zionism : He will prune drastically these young shoots, and cut down these promising branches and thus stop their expansion, and Israel will be brought very low. Does not God always deal in this way with those whom He is purposing to bless? As Hannah puts it in her magnificent song in I Samuel, Ch. 2, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive : He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh

poor, and maketh rich : He bringeth low and lifteth up." If He is going to bring Israel low, it is because afterwards He intends to lift her up. Does He not have to bring every sinner low, before He can lift them up into a new life? He must break down the self-righteousness of every sinner before they can learn to value aright the imputed righteousness of Christ. Thus God is purposing to humble His ancient people that He may exalt them to a glorious position among the nations of the world.

Another very important passage dealing with this approaching distress for Israel is found in Jeremiah, Ch. 30 : 1 to 11. In verse 3 God promises the return of the Jews to their own land thus : "For, lo, the days come," saith the Lord, "that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah," saith the Lord, "and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." This verse gives us the context of the passage which follows. It shews us that the passage which immediately follows it refers to the return of the Jews which is already taking place in our day. These verses which follow the verse which has been quoted above are very significant, for they confirm the fact that the Jews now going back to their country must face very severe trouble as we see in verses 4 to 7 : And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord : "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child. Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it : it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." This last verse describes a day of great distress which cannot be compared with any other day; it fits in exactly with what Daniel writes in Ch. 12 : 1, There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the Book; and also with our Lord's statement in Matthew 24 : 21, where He says : "Then shall be great tribulation, such as

was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be."

As we see today the alarming threat of atomic warfare between the nations, and Israel surrounded by her enemies who want to annihilate her, it seems more than probable that we now stand on the brink of the abyss, that the time of overwhelming trouble for the world is close at hand, and we do well to remember what was written by the prophet Zephaniah in Ch. 2. After foretelling that the Jews are to gather themselves together as a nation before the fierce anger of the Lord comes upon them, he then adds a strong word of advice to those who are living in the world between those two events, i.e., between the coming together of the nation in their own land, and the great day of God's out-poured anger upon Israel and all the nations. This is the message which the Holy Spirit gives him to pass on to the people living on the earth in that time: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." In these days when multitudes of people are making no effort to seek the Lord, how very easy it is for the child of God to get slack, to let his love for his Lord grow cold, and to cease to seek after righteousness and meekness. May the Lord arouse us that we may be those who have understanding of the times, and are enabled to bear our witness by the way we live and by the words we speak.

We have quoted two passages, one in Isaiah 18 and the other in Jeremiah 30, both of which speak of the severe trouble which Israel must face at the end time. But we should also notice that in both passages Israel comes through her tribulation to experience wonderful blessing at the hands of God. Isaiah 18 ends with this glorious hope for the future of God's ancient people, thus: "In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out (or 'fastened together') and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the mount Zion."

So Israel is to be brought as a present to the Lord and will become in that day cleansed and sanctified. A great spiritual blessing is yet to come to this despised and hated race.

Hear what God says through the prophet Ezekiel is yet to take place: Ezekiel 36: 23 and following verses: "The heathen (nations) shall know that I am the Lord," saith the Lord God, "when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen (nations), and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you . . . and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God." A complete moral and spiritual transformation of the whole nation is going to take place.

It is also clear from Jeremiah 30 that the great day of Jacob's trouble will be followed by a mighty deliverance from God: verses 8 to 11: "For it shall come to pass in that day," saith the Lord of Hosts, "that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them . . . Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee," saith the Lord, "to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." Thus God is going to fulfill His gracious purposes for Israel. The words of the Psalmist in Psalm 66: 12 are yet to be experienced by God's people, Israel, "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads (surely a reference to war aeroplanes); we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

All that is taking place in the Middle East today is indeed very suggestive concerning this dire trouble which must take place in the near future. Here is another sign that the Word of God is coming to pass before our eyes, the Word which rings with the note of authority and reliability, the Word which people will only despise to their eternal loss.

12. The Jews on returning would rebuild their cities.

We read in Ezekiel, Ch. 36 : 33 to 36 : Thus saith the Lord God, "In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited. Then the heathen (nations) that are left about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate : I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." What God declared would come to pass is happening before our eyes today. The Jews are rebuilding their cities. What is happening now is only on a small scale compared with what will take place when the Lord cleanses the people from their sins. (See Amos 9 : 14 and 15).

13. The city of Jerusalem would greatly expand.

In Jeremiah 31 : 38 to 40 we read, "Behold, the days come," saith the Lord, "that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the East, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever." Let me quote from "Rebuilding Palestine according to prophecy," by Mr. George T. B. Davis, pages 34 and 35 : "More than 2,500 years ago the prophet Jeremiah looked down the long corridors of time

and foretold the boundaries of Jerusalem as they are today. This prophecy of Jeremiah regarding the future boundary lines of the city of Jerusalem is one of the most remarkable forecasts of material things ever made in the history of mankind. Here is an Israelitish prophet daring to predict with the precision of a surveyor the exact building development of a great city thousands of years after his words were penned. No other writer outside the Bible has ever attempted such a thing. It is a striking proof of the supernatural inspiration of the Bible, for all men may see for themselves with what wonderful precision the prophecy has been fulfilled. Little by little, for centuries past, one after another of the clauses of the forecast have been accomplished until now at last the entire prediction has almost or quite been consummated." The city of Jerusalem has now expanded far beyond the ancient city walls as far as the suburbs of Goath and Gareb. In our day we have witnessed God's Word spoken through Jeremiah having its literal fulfilment.

14. The Jews would plant foreign fruit slips.

Isaiah Ch. 17 : 10 and 11 are very interesting verses.

This is what the prophet writes : "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and has not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with strange slips : in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish : but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow."

There is a strong indication that these two verses refer to the events of the last days because of the verses which follow.

The following verses seem to concern the final warfare of this present age, when the nations rush together against Israel like the rushing of a mighty flood ; but God intervenes to rebuke them and they find themselves up against His almighty power and are utterly defeated. The passage ends on the note that it is the purpose of God to vanquish completely those nations who would seek to spoil and rob

the Jews. Here are the actual words in the authorised version:—"Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters. The nations rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold at eventide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us." These verses seem to be a shorter account of what Ezekiel foretells in Ch. 38 and 39 of his great prophecies. Many students of the Bible believe that Ezekiel writes about the last great attack on Israel in these two chapters, that final battle of Armageddon when the Lord miraculously intervenes to save his nation from the mighty forces of the Northern nations who come swooping down on the land of Israel to annihilate the Jewish people and to capture their land. These verses in Isaiah would seem to give us a similar picture of that last great attempt to vanquish Israel and of the utter failure of these Gentile nations to accomplish their purpose.

The following chapter, as we have already indicated, seems to refer to the final events of this age. If we are right in thinking this to be so, then it would seem highly probable that the two verses which we are considering, i.e., Isaiah 17: 10-11, also refer to some happening at the close of this present age. The writer is well aware that some commentators would spiritualise these two verses, as one recent commentary states as follows: "The figurative allusion is to Israel's acceptance of foreign practices, cults and alliances."

But a more literal interpretation seems more likely to be indicated. What happened when the Jews started to rebuild their national home in the land which God gave to their fathers? They found desolation everywhere and after preparing the soil they were forced to import a vast number of foreign fruit trees from America and other places. This they would never have had to do if they had not been dispossessed of their land through their forgetfulness of God

and their rejection of Christ, Who desired to be the Rock of their strength. But forgetting God and refusing the Saviour, they were driven out of their land and the land became desolate for centuries. So when at long last they were permitted to return they were forced to import very many fruit trees.

"Thou shalt plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange (or foreign) slips." The Jews have been doing this since they have begun to cultivate their land once more. We should notice too how this passage ends, and consider the very precarious condition of the State of Israel today. The passage ends thus: "In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow." The night-time for this Christless effort of Zionism has not yet arrived. It is still its day-time, and in their day they are witnessing the growth of their fruit trees: it is still the morning time of the attempt of the Jews to rebuild Zionism, and in the present morning when their sun is still shining, they are seeing splendid results in the cultivation of their vineyards and orchards; but the end of the verse is deeply significant, "But the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow." In these last words we have a clear warning which is in keeping with many other passages of God's Word, that this present building which is being so enthusiastically erected by the Jews, lacks the right foundation, for the Jews still do not acknowledge the Lord Jesus as their Saviour; and because the Zionism of today is still rejecting the One Whom God has appointed to be their Messiah and King, they must soon suffer a very serious set-back. The time of "Jacob's trouble" as depicted in Jeremiah 30, which we have previously considered, is going to be for the Jews "the day of grief and desperate sorrow." As we view the grave dangers which threaten Israel today; as we watch the increasing animosity of the Egyptians and Arabs against Israel; as we see the preparations which are being made by Soviet Russia to interfere in the affairs of the Middle East; as we see Israel surrounded by her enemies, we must realise that they are nearing a day of

intense suffering: but this short period of tribulation will lead the Jews to humble themselves before their God, then the Lord will come to their deliverance. It is surely at that critical time for their nation, when all looks so hopeless for them, that the great prophecy of Joel will have its fulfilment. Chap. 2: 1, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the Day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. verse 12, "Therefore now," saith the Lord, "turn ye to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful: slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil." verse 17, "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen (nations) should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then the Lord will be jealous for His land, and pity His people. . . . "I will remove far off from you the Northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the East sea, and his hind part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things." . . . verse 27, "And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed." Ch. 3: 1 and 2: "For behold in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all

nations, and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land." verses 16 and 17: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."

These very important verses have never yet had their fulfilment; but world events today seem to suggest that this prophetic passage will very soon be turned into history, for God is indeed working His purposes out.

If we are drawing near to the day of grief and desperate sorrow for the Jews, we are also drawing near to a day of very severe judgments for the Gentile nations, the day of God's mighty intervention on behalf of Israel and the whole world. God's Word is coming to pass before our eyes: and if our eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God we shall see the meaning of present world events, and of God's plan of deliverance for Israel and eventually for the whole world.

15. The returning Jews would make vineyards and orchards.

In Amos 9: 14 and 15 we read "And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them," saith the Lord thy God.

All who know what is taking place in Israel today will realise how accurately God's Word is coming to pass. Cities are being rebuilt; vineyards have been planted and the wine from Palestine has been exported to many parts of the world; sandy wastes have been turned into beautiful

orange groves. As Mr. George Davis writes: "Desert places have been transformed into a veritable garden of Eden. Indeed, it is quite probable that such a sudden change from a waste wilderness to a land blossoming as the rose has never before been witnessed in the history of the world."

16. The Jews would plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria. (Jeremiah 31: 5).

At the time when Jeremiah wrote this prophecy the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already gone into captivity, and it would seem most improbable that such a thing as this could ever take place. But Jeremiah writing by the inspiration of God's Spirit said that it would be so; and we have seen it come to pass. Since their return to their own land the Jews have been planting vines upon the mountains of Samaria, and this prophecy has had its fulfilment in our day and generation.

17. The Jews would export their fruit to many different parts of the world.

In another passage which is evidently concerned with latter day events, Isaiah, Ch. 27, we find this prophecy in verse 6, "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." The Jews are once again taking root in their own land; The "blossom and the bud" is in evidence throughout the State of Israel today. In his very informative book, "The New State of Israel," Mr. Gerald de Gaury writes thus on her fruit growing: "The intensity of citrus cultivation in the central coastal plain, once seen, will always be remembered as something exceptional in the Middle East. Prior to the second World War, the total area of citrus fruit, mainly oranges, was about 290,000 dunams (72,500 acres). For the disposal of its fruit the country depends on foreign markets. Difficulties of shipment made export impossible during the war. From the pre-war peak export of 15,000,000 cases, exports fell to 3,865,000 cases in 1951."

To export 15,000,000 cases of fruit reveals the fact that

many countries have tasted the fruit of Palestine in the last forty years; and in the years to come it is very probable that they will greatly extend their exports along this line. "Israel shall fill the face of the world with fruit." Is not this already coming to pass?

18. The Jews would come to the front among the nations in a remarkable way.

In writing about what God is going to do for the Jewish people at the end-time Zephaniah declares: "Behold at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out: and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time I will bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes," saith the Lord (Ch. 3: 19 to 20).

Those who have studied the history of the Jewish people must acknowledge that in the last hundred years the Jews have come to the front among the nations of the world in a very remarkable way. Dr. Sale Harrison in his book "The remarkable Jew" points this fact out very clearly. He writes as follows:—"No one will doubt that the Jews of today hold the money chests of the world. Wherever they have gone they have become the wizards of finance." A careful computation of the university professors of Western Europe, apart from Great Britain before the first World War, showed that about 70 per cent were of Jewish birth and persuasion. Dr. R. M. Stevenson, Ph.D., F.R.G.S., in an address to Jews in Chicago in 1924, uttered this statement:—"It is remarkable the immense number of famous men of the present, and also of the past generation, who are identified with the Hebrew race. In the medical world we have men like Dr. Lombroso, the leading expert on insanity; Dr. Mandelstamm, the world's famous oculist; Dr. Abram, the world's most noted blood specialist. The world's greatest mathematician, Dr. Sylvester, was a Jew. One of the cleverest statesmen that England ever produced, Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli), was

a Jew. Among Christian scholars we have men like Delitsch, Da Costa, Adolph Saphir, Edersheim, Frank, Neander and many others. The leading bankers in the world today are Jews; the leading scientists and philosophers are Jews; the leading musicians and composers are Jews; and among historians, poets and literary men the Jews have a leading place. Only three per cent. of the population in Germany are Jews, yet they hold over 100 chairs in the universities of the land. The European Press is almost wholly controlled by Jewish brains, and this to a large extent is true of the American Press, some of the best known newspapers being owned by Jews."

Some years ago the following facts were published in an American Christian paper, "The King's Business": "A writer in the Menorah Monthly speaks of the contributions which modern Judaism has made to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Hertz proved the existence of electromagnetic waves, and by doing so cut a path for Marconi. Moissan discovered fluorine, and first made diamonds from carbon. Michelson has taught scientific men new methods of measuring light. Lippman is the pioneer in colour photography. Rubens has made epoch-making discoveries in spectrum investigation, especially in infra-red. Victor Meyer was the great pioneer in carbon compound study. J. F. Cohn was a leader with Pasteur in the investigations of micro-organisms. The Herschels were astronomers of note. Jacques Loeb is the discoverer of artificial parthenogenesis. Willstaeter has blazed the way in the chemistry of chlorophyll. Ehrlich was a blood investigator and the discoverer of the remedy 606. Lafayette Mendel is distinguished for his investigation in the vital needs of the body. Casimir Fun is the discoverer of vitamins; Einstein of a revolutionary theory in physics, and so on."

Of course, it is well known that the Jews received a very severe set-back in the second World War, when it is estimated that Hitler had over six million Jews cruelly murdered. A great number of the foremost Jews of the world must have perished in that terrible period of tragedy for the people of Israel. Had they not held such a promi-

nent place amongst the German people it is probable that they would not have suffered such a ghastly fate.

But it is surely clear from the above quotations that this nation which has been so decadent and feeble for many long centuries is now, in our times, putting on a new life and coming to the fore, and has already begun to win esteem and praise in many countries where they have formerly been put to shame.

The prophecy in Zephaniah which we have been considering undoubtedly awaits its complete fulfilment until our Lord returns to set up His Millennial kingdom; but already we have the evidence that it has begun to be fulfilled. It is also of much interest to note that at the time when God is going to uplift the Jewish nation and get the Jews fame in every land, at that time He has declared that He will undo those people who afflict the Jew. We have a very striking example of this in the punishment that has been meted out to the German people. They brought the Jewish people very low by bitter and cruel persecution in the second World War; and now as a consequence they have been brought very low themselves. Their people have suffered very acutely and their country has been divided, and their unity broken. Truly God has been fulfilling His Word; He has been undoing the nation that has been persecuting His nation. God is faithful to His promises, and we are seeing His Word verified before our eyes.

19. The Jews are to resume their ancient Hebrew language.

The Hebrew language is the sacred language of the Jewish people. The Old Testament is almost entirely a Hebrew book. And with very few exceptions the original was written in the Hebrew language. But the Jews who were dispersed among the Gentile nations for the most part forsook their own language and learned the language of the nations among whom they dwelt. The following interesting information comes from the pen of Mr. D. M. Panton: "A Zionist Congress, in Carlsbad, brought vividly before the world the immemorable, the indestructible, the

irrepressible Jew. There sat the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, with long white beard, in flowing picturesque robes; nearby sat an excited, ill-kept Marxian Jew, voluble with 'labour' interjections; and yonder (says an eye-witness) stood a tall, modern, vivacious woman, speaking perfect Hebrew but for a slight American accent. It is the international Jew, dispersed through all lands, yet laden with an immense destiny, and standing with face turned toward Jerusalem and the dawn. And the Congress spoke in Hebrew. For nearly twenty centuries Hebrew has been dead. After the fall of the Temple in A.D. 70 it ceased to be a spoken language. In December, 1922, died Eliezer ben Yehuda, who by forty years' toil, and through storms of anger and anathema—the Jews even refusing to take his dead wife to the Mount of Olives—restored Hebrew to Israel. "During the first twenty years of his life in Palestine," says the Jerusalem correspondent of *The Times* (January 1st, 1924) "he was looked upon as crazy. But he lived to see the world of his dream; he lived to see a census return according to which 96 per cent. of the Jews of Palestine declared Hebrew to be their mother tongue."

Hebrew is now widely used throughout the State of Israel; it is used in all Jewish schools and universities, in text-books, lectures, and in other branches of learning. Eliezer ben Yehuda is the man who is mainly responsible for this. Speaking in different languages the Jews would be disunited, but now that all returning Jews are learning once again to speak in their mother tongue, they are finding it the greatest help in uniting them together as one nation. But this is what God foretold through Ezekiel would happen, "I will make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel." (Ezekiel 37: 22.) But it would seem that there is a more definite reference than this to their change of language in Zephaniah 3: 8-9. "Therefore wait ye upon Me," saith the Lord, "until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them My indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure

language, that they may call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."

In the margin of our Bible we read:—"I will turn to the peoples a pure lip." The phrase may just mean that God is going to send a great revival of true religion to the nations of the world: that the nations will then worship the Lord with pure hearts and lips. It would appear from the Scriptures that the tremendous trouble which we can see beginning to come upon the world is going to be used by God to humble men and to make them repent of their sins of unbelief and indifference to God and His claims. For we find these words in Isaiah 26: 9, "For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." This may be its prior meaning; but there are many students of prophecy who believe that the verse refers to the Jews being turned by God to the adoption of their ancient pure tongue.

This verse has very special interest for us today because of the great departure from God and His word which seems to be so prevalent throughout the world. The majority of people seem to be forgetting God, and living their lives as if death ended everything, living just for present enjoyment without any fear of God's judgments: and yet we have very clear evidence that we are rapidly approaching a day of appalling trouble for the nations. And yet the dark time which must soon come will prove to be the means used by God to bring men to their right senses.

The very tragic position is that such fearful trouble as we see approaching would not have to be faced by the world had men heeded the wonderful Gospel of God's redeeming love and grace. But men are despising the Gospel of God's mercy and so must face the anger of His judgments.

God is yet going to pour out upon men His indignation and fierce anger, and many of God's people see that this terrible time for the world is close at hand. But it is then, at such a time as this, that God will turn to the people a pure lip.

Just at the time when we see God's judgments threatening a heedless world, we see the Jews returning to their

ancient Hebrew language. Is not this significant and should it not stir our hearts to see the Scriptures alive and active today?

20. The Jews are to change their attitude towards our Lord.

Down the long centuries since their dispersion among the Gentile nations the Jews have shewn a bitter hatred for Christ, and most of them have strongly resisted every attempt to win them over to Christianity. They have been blind to the Divine claims of the Son of God, and have regarded Him, not as their Messiah, but as an impostor. As Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome about them in Ch. 11: 25: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." A hundred years ago most Jews would spit at the Name "Jesus," such was their hatred and contempt for Him; but now we are witnessing a great change with many of them. There is a very significant change coming over them in their attitude towards our Lord. No longer will many of them spit at the mention of our Lord's Name, but they look upon our Lord today as one of their greatest prophets. Some Jews have been demanding a re-trial of Christ, believing that their forefathers at the time of our Lord's first coming did not do justice to our Lord's claims.

A real change in the attitude of the Jewish people towards Christianity has already begun to take place: this change is recorded by the Rev. Jakob Jocz, Ph.D., in his book "Judaism and the State of Israel." This address was the "Charles Boys' Lectures" for 1950 which he gave at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, by the invitation of the Bishop of London. In the course of his lecture he said this:—"Christian influence upon Jewish thought and behaviour is not confined to the indirect influence of European culture. Christian missions have played their part both in the 'Diaspora' and in Israel. Their persistent efforts of witness have not been without results. Although Jews are reluctant to admit any measure of success on the

part of missionaries, and go out of their way to misrepresent their motives, they cannot easily deny an obvious fact: there is a growing number of Jews who believe in the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. In this respect the position in Israel is unique. In the past 'converts' were expected to assume a hostile position towards their kinsmen, to sever all connections with their people and to submerge among the Gentiles. Adherence to the Christian Faith was regarded not only as a renunciation of Judaism but also as treason to the Jewish people. But with the appearance of a national State the situation has changed. Today there are Jews in Israel who are loyal to the State, who speak Hebrew, who are actively engaged in building Zion, and who are nevertheless disciples of Jesus Christ. Some were converted in the 'Diaspora' and came to Israel already as baptized Christians; others were converted in Palestine and either joined a particular branch of the Church or remained secret believers. Their numbers are unknown because few of them can afford to reveal themselves in view of the threats of ostracism. But nobody doubts, least of all the Jews themselves, that such exist and that in one way or another they exert influence upon Jewish life. One group of Jewish Christians organised a conference in Israel at which a resolution was passed to demand of the State recognition as a religious community. This immediately created a great sensation. On the one hand it was felt that such recognition was in accordance with the principle of freedom of conscience, on the other hand the novelty of recognizing Jewish Christians as Jews was such that even the most audacious still hesitated. The question has not yet been decided. . . . Meanwhile, the problem remains of how to deal with loyal Jews who have accepted the Christian faith. Their number is still small, but will steadily increase as the principle of freedom permeates Jewish society. Some Jewish Christians have already rendered valuable service to the State."

We are informed that there is quite a big demand for the whole Bible in Israel today: Jews are carefully reading and studying the New Testament in the Hebrew tongue and a new light is beginning to dawn on many of them.

All this change in the attitude of the Jewish people towards Christianity is undoubtedly preparing the nation for that great day which the writer believes to be rapidly approaching when the whole nation will recognize the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Messiah. It has been frequently pointed out in the previous pages of this book that the coming day of "Jacob's trouble" is going to be brought to an end by the return of Christ in His glory to deliver His nation in the hour of their desperate need, and that at that time they will recognize Him as their Messiah, Whom their nation rejected and crucified 1900 years ago.

In that great passage in Zechariah 12 which is clearly dealing with the final events of this present age, we read in verses 9 and 10: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." We note that it is the Lord Jesus Himself Who is speaking. Again He says in Ch. 13: 1, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

Paul writing by the Spirit to the Christians at Rome, says in Ch. 11: 25 to 27, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

Ezekiel foretells the same wonderful blessing which is to come to the Jewish people at the end of this age in Ch. 36: 24 to 28. It is the Lord Himself who is speaking: "For I will take you from among the heathen (i.e., nations) and gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and

ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God."

If the first part of this great prophecy is being fulfilled in our own day, as it most certainly is, for the Lord is gathering the people of Israel out of all countries and is bringing them back into their own land in a state of unbelief in Christ, then it is only logical to believe that according to the second part of this prediction He is going to work a mighty spiritual transformation in their hearts and lives some time after a number of them have returned.

The quotation above is confirmed in Ezekiel Ch. 39: 27 to 29, where the Lord is again speaking: "When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide My face any more from them: for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

Incidentally it is of great interest to know from this passage that God intends to bring back eventually all Israelites into the land which He promised to Abraham and to his seed.

God has His watchmen today who continually pray for the fulfilment of these great promises for Israel as we read in Isaiah 62: 6 to 7: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Let us look at one other passage revealed by God to His

servant Moses over three thousand years ago. Deuteronomy 30: 1 to 8: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things shall come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all His commandments which I command thee this day."

So we can see that there is very abundant proof from the Scriptures that a great future awaits the people of Israel when the nation is truly converted to God. Israel is not finished as some would have us believe. Nay, the most glorious part of their history is yet to come, when the saved people of Israel, under the personal government of their rightful King and Messiah, are going to be made a mighty blessing to all the nations of the world. We so often sing in church the wonderful prayer of a Godly Jew as he prays for the salvation of God upon his race, and we fail to recognize the deep truth underlying the prayer. Psalm 67: 1 to 2: God be merciful unto us (Jews), and bless us (Jews), and cause His face to shine upon us (Jews); that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. And verse 4, "O let the nations be

glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." It is when the Jewish people are brought by God into great spiritual blessing at the coming of their King, that they will be used by God to bring His blessing to all the nations of the world. Meanwhile, as we wait for that great day which is surely coming soon, let us rejoice in the fact that God has already begun to fulfil His Word concerning the spiritual blessings which His chosen nation will one day experience and enjoy to the full.

We see signs today of a change of attitude on the part of Jews to the Divine Person of their Messiah, a change such as has not been seen before all down the Christian era; we see more Jews reading and studying the New Testament and acknowledging our Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Messiah than any previous generation has seen since the days of the early Church. And we see it happening at a time so many other prophecies are being fulfilled which are all pointing to the fact that God is about to intervene in the affairs of the world to humble mankind and to bring the whole earth under His Divine government.

If we cannot see the great Day approaching, we must indeed be blind. If all these signs do not arouse us to see that the Lord is at hand, we must indeed be walking like blind men.

That God means us to see when the day is coming we can understand from Hebrews 10: 24 to 25: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the Day approaching."

Those who give time and thought to the great prophecies can indeed see how near we must be now to the great Day of our Lord's appearing, and so we must seek to encourage one another in this great and blessed hope. Now let us try and summarise these predictions we have been studying concerning the Jewish people and see what their accumulative effect is upon our minds.

This marvellous book, the Bible, which so many today have put on one side as out-of-date and unreliable, has

foretold with the greatest accuracy the very events which are taking place in the world today. It foretells, as we have seen, that Israel would come to life again as a nation; that the land of Palestine would be prepared for them; that the Jews would return to the land that God gave to their father; that they would purchase some land to which they would return; that they would have this land in their own possession; that they would return from all parts of the world, but especially from the North country; that Jerusalem would be set free from the down-treading oppression of the Gentile Powers; that there would be the flying of the flag of Israel and the blowing of the shophar; that the Jews would be brought back to their ancient home by two methods, by fishing and by hunting; that the Jews would return to their land unwanted by the nations; that they would return to their land to face dire trouble; that the Jews on returning would rebuild their cities; that the city of Jerusalem would greatly expand; that the returning Jews would plant foreign fruit slips; that they would make vineyards and orchards; that they would plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; that they would export their fruit to many different parts of the world; that the Jews would come to the front among the nations in a remarkable way; that they would once more speak their ancient language; that they would change their attitude towards our Lord.

With regard to the above predictions concerning the Jewish people, it cannot be said that these things have been happening all down the centuries, because it would obviously not be true to say it. None of these prophecies were being fulfilled a hundred years ago; but they have all been fulfilled or are in process of being fulfilled in our own generation. As it has been pointed out before, it would seem quite improbable that any of these predictions would take place, for they are nearly all based on the return of the Jews to their own land after being exiled from it for nearly nineteen hundred years. That this persecuted and dead race should be coming to life again in such a remarkable manner is one of the great miracles of history, and could not be regarded as an event which was likely to take place. It would indeed be a marvellous thing if any man

would dare to invent such happenings, because such an idea is opposed to the great facts of history, for such a miracle as this has never happened before in the whole recording of man's life on earth.

We are driven to one conclusion, and only one; it is that our great God Who knows the end from the beginning, inspired the writers of the Bible to record what He alone knew would take place thousands of years later. Here we have the clear evidence that the Bible is "alive" today. Every child of God down the Christian era has rejoiced in this fact without these proofs which God is giving the world now. But it would seem that in our day, when so many people are very perplexed about the things which matter most, when so many have turned away from the Bible, through the influence of teachers and ministers who have taught that it is only a human book full of myth and fable, when the teaching of evolution and destructive criticism has brought the Bible into disrepute with multitudes of people; it would seem that at such a time as this, when man is so desperately needing a trustworthy guide, God is giving to the world through the discoveries of the archaeologists and through the evidence of fulfilled prophecy extra convincing proof that, in spite of all that infidels may say against it, the Bible is "alive" today and speaks with Divine authority, and, in the light of this fresh evidence through prophecy and archaeology, woe be to men and women who still reject and despise this Divine light which God has provided for the world to meet the darkness through which the world is now passing.

Throw away the torch of Divine truth, and you will find yourself facing the gravest trouble the world has ever known without a light, without a Saviour, and without any hope.

Those who despise the Word of God must perish in their sins; for it is the one and only authoritative Book which reveals God's way of forgiveness for fallen man. To refuse to heed the voice of God speaking to us through the Bible is to insult the One Who has given to man this wonderful revelation of His love and mercy. So we read in Proverbs 13: 13, "Whoso despiseth the Word shall be destroyed."

It is either the light of Holy Scripture, or the darkness of having only the fallible word of sinful, mortal man upon which to rest our souls for the unknown world beyond death.

We each one choose the guide we desire to follow; and our eternal destiny depends upon the choice we make.

We have now considered certain predictions in the Bible concerning international affairs and concerning the Jewish people; and we have seen how they are being fulfilled before our eyes today. But it may be that some of my readers are not interested in international affairs or in the Jewish people. Your chief interest may lie in the religious and social life of the people around you. You have been forced to face the problems which confront us all today as we mix with the men and women around us in this modern 20th century. And you may ask "Does the Bible throw any light upon the religious and social life of this present time?" Indeed it does; again and again it foretells with meticulous care the sort of life people will live in the days immediately prior to the coming of our Lord.

Let us examine now what Holy Scripture predicts about the religious and social life of the world in the last days of this present age.

Before we do so, we should bear in mind the kind of life we should expect people to be living nineteen hundred years after the first coming of our Lord, when God became man and lived His unique and sinless life amongst men on earth, when He died for our sins upon the cross, and rose triumphant from the grave, and ascended up to heaven; when He gave commandment to His disciples to proclaim to all the world the good news of His readiness to give life and pardon to every member of the human race who would repent of their sins and would accept Him as Saviour and Lord of their lives; this was the time when He gave His Holy Spirit to His people for the carrying out of His loving plan for every sinner. A mighty transformation took place in the days of the early church through the preaching of the Gospel of God's Grace. So much was this so that the Jews at Thessalonica made reference to the wonderful success of the two evangelists Paul and Silas in these words :

"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." In a few short years the Gospel of Christ had been proclaimed in country after country with amazing results : wonderful conversions were taking place, and those in highest authority, even Nero, the Emperor of Rome, were constrained to take notice of this growing band of new-born men and women. If so much was accomplished in the first century after our Lord came, would we not expect that after nineteen hundred years of Gospel preaching by this ever-increasing body of Christian people, the great majority of people in the world would have embraced the Christian Faith. That surely would have been our expectation had we been living in those wonderful days. Now as the Bible reveals a completely different picture from this concerning the religious and social life of people at the end of this Gospel age, we are forced to admit the Bible predictions are not according to the expectations of men; this being so, it is utterly unlikely that men would invent these predictions of the future, and this provides us with a sure proof that they could only have been inserted in the Bible by One who knows the future as clearly as He knows the past. God knew beforehand how men would treat the Gospel of His Grace down the Christian centuries; and so He revealed to His servants who wrote the books of the Bible what would take place at the end-time.

As we study together what the writers have foretold about life in the last-days, we shall be forced to admit that they were perfectly right, and therefore they must have been written under the direct inspiration of God. It should make us see once again that the Bible is "alive" today. So let us now consider together

C. Predictions Concerning Religious and Social Life in the Last Days.

1. There would be great conflict between Capital and Labour.

This is what we read in James 5 : 1 to 8 : "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall

come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. (R.V. 'Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days'). Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

How true this passage is concerning the business world today. What a conflict still rages in our own time between capital and labour. In the last fifty years many multi-millionaires have been heaping up a vast amount of wealth which many have been spending in wantonness and luxury for their own enjoyment, in some cases utterly regardless of the hardship and suffering which have been the lot of those who have enabled them to possess this great wealth. The R.V. translation of the latter part of verse 5 is "Ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." How many men have congratulated themselves on the profits they made at the expense of others in the two great wars, i.e., in a day of slaughter.

The background of Communism in Russia reveals a very sad picture. Under the Czarist regime the few wealthy aristocrats possessed the wealth of the country and the labourers who toiled on the land were kept under by the rich. If a priest suggested the education and uplifting of the masses he would be sent into exile. Before the revolution in Russia, when the peasants were facing tremendous hardship and many were dying of starvation, an appeal was made to the Russian Church to sell her rich jewels

to provide for the poor people who were in desperate straits. Among those who were suffering in this way were the future Bolshevik leaders. When they called upon the Russian Church to come to their help, the order went out from the heads of the church that they were not to sell their jewels for this purpose. What did they care whether the people had food or not. This was the only religion with which many Bolsheviks had come into contact. We can hardly wonder at the reaction of the toilers when they understood the situation. But the passage tells us that the cry of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. God has always condemned those who have oppressed the poor, and when the Lord comes to set up His Kingdom, His special concern will be the oppressed and needy. In Psalm 72 which depicts so beautifully the coming Kingdom of our Lord upon this earth we read in verses 12-14: "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight." In this passage before us God urges His people through James to exercise patience until the Lord comes. He is coming to put the world right, meanwhile we are called to wait in patience for that great day. However, in our day we have witnessed a very strong and united action on behalf of the workers through the Trade Unions, and strikes are the order of the day if the Trade Unions think that the workers are not getting a fair deal. Such is the reaction on behalf of labour that the majority of working men today have sufficient for many pleasures and luxuries which their fathers could never afford. In our country it is the people who have small fixed incomes which do not increase with the rise of prices who are the most hard hit.

In such countries as Russia and her satellite countries, also in China, Japan, India, etc., there is still grinding poverty and the mass of the people cry out for deliverance from oppression and want. The conflict between capital and labour is still an acute one in the world, and it will remain so until the Lord comes.

2. The last days would be marked by great evil and violence in the world.

Our Lord likened the period directly preceding His return in glory to the days which directly preceded the judgment of the Flood. The Saviour in speaking of His second coming said in Matthew 24 : 36 and 37 as follows : "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

It was because the wickedness in the world in Noah's day made it ripe for judgment that God sent the Flood to drown the world.

It is because the wickedness in the world in the last days is so great that God considers it ripe for judgment and is sending His Son to execute that judgment upon the world.

Before the Flood came God clearly pronounced the wickedness and violence which prevailed everywhere. Genesis 6 : 5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Verse 11, "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

The people of those days may have thought that they were not living too bad a life; but what we have recorded is how God saw the world. God saw the evil, the corruption and the violence.

The utter disregard of God and His laws by the masses of people today is the explanation of the evil and corruption so prevalent everywhere. What clearer proof of the appalling corruption and moral degradation could we have than the sadistic cruelties so widely practised in such large and important countries as Russia and Germany.

The increase of crime and violence among young people is proving a very alarming problem in this generation.

Everywhere today there is corruption and violence. It is seen in the robberies and murders which are being constantly committed; it is seen in the many homes which are being broken up by divorce through violent quarrels

between husband and wife; it has been engendered and encouraged by the terrible bloodshed of the two great world wars; it is seen in the constant strikes and revolutions which take place in so many different parts of the world; it is seen in the mowing down of the civilian population by the Russian tanks when the people of Hungary revolted against Soviet oppression; it has been seen in the fearful cruelties of the concentration camps. When atomic warfare is brought about by the madness of the nations, the corruption and violence of that day will bring such agony and misery to mankind as the world has never before experienced. Can we not see that our days resemble the days of Noah and that Divine intervention and judgment are close upon us ?

3. The last days would be marked by indifference and ignorance.

In speaking about the days of Noah in Matthew, Ch. 24, our Lord went on to say in verses 38 and 39 : "For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And then our Lord goes on to speak of the most solemn separation which will take place when He comes : "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." The Saviour here indicates that right up to the time of His actual coming the people of the world will be carrying on as usual in their ordinary, everyday lives completely ignorant of what is about to take place. They "knew not until the Flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Why were the people in Noah's day ignorant of the coming judgment? Had not Noah warned them? Indeed he had; for 120 years he had been telling them what God intended to do. Then why did they not know? They evidently regarded him as a religious fanatic who suffered

from a serious delusion. In other words, their ignorance was a result of their unbelief; they just did not believe the message Noah brought them from God.

So today many are being warned that the coming of our Lord is near; but the people who give the warning are looked upon by the world as religious cranks and fanatics, and the warning goes unheeded, and the vast majority of people continue in their ignorance and unbelief. The warning then came to the world through one man, Noah: today great numbers of the Lord's people all over the world are bearing their witness to the near coming of our Lord, and, above all, in our times we have the clear witness of the Bible to the great fact that Christ is coming again, and to the signs of His coming which stare us in the face today.

Yes, these days in which we live are marked by indifference and ignorance.

4. In the last days there would be mockers and scoffers.

This prediction naturally follows on our last one. Those who do not believe God's warning will often scoff at the message. In II Peter 3: 3 to 4 we read: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." When Lot warned his sons in law that God was about to destroy Sodom with a sudden judgment from heaven, they treated the whole matter as a huge joke. "He seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." We can almost hear them saying to their friends "Did you ever hear such a silly, fantastic story? Lot tells us that our city is going to be destroyed tomorrow; he must be going out of his mind; who ever heard such rot?" This is exactly what so many think today when we tell them on the authority of the Bible that Christ is about to come to take away His own people before the judgments of God come on a world which has spurned His warning.

5. In the last days God's Commandments would be broken on every side.

We find our Lord saying in Matthew 24: 12, where He

is speaking of His return in glory, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The word "iniquity" can be equally rendered "lawlessness."

"Lawlessness shall abound," says our Lord. Men live their lives today, for the most part, utterly regardless of God's laws. This is what Major Alister Smith has written about life today: "The sanctions, traditions and restraints of the past are gone, and we live in a lawless, godless age. Truth has died, and life has become one big lie for multitudes. The ten Commandments are torn up and forgotten. People cease to think or feel: standards have gone, and restraint has ceased. There is worse to come as long as the drift from God continues."

6. In the last days the love of many would wax cold.

This is the second part of our Lord's statement quoted above.

The result of the prevailing lawlessness is that very many Christians have experienced a cooling-off in their love for Christ. Contact with the icy coldness of the world towards the things of God has removed from Christians something of the heat of the Holy Spirit. Through a sad neglect of prayer, Bible study, and witness a great many of the Lord's people have lost that keen spirit which once they possessed. The colder the spiritual atmosphere, the more do we Christians need to be continually seeking the fire of God's Spirit in our lives, lest instead of being burning and shining lights as the Lord means us to be, we find our lamp burning very low.

"Because lawlessness shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

7. In the last days perilous times would come.

This is what the apostle Paul says in his second letter to Timothy, Ch. 3, verse 1: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." There is no need to enlarge much on this. Today there is peril on the road with constant motor accidents; peril in the air; hardly a day goes by without the report in our daily papers of some aeroplane that has crashed to its ruin. There is peril today

for lonely women and children from those who would assault them. We think of all the terrible perils which people have faced all over the world in the two great world wars.

Yes, perilous times have indeed come.

8. In the last days men would be self-centred.

II Timothy 3 : 2, "Men shall be lovers of their own selves."

Is it not the selfishness of people today which is the root cause of so many trade disputes, and of so much quarrelling in the home life? Selfishness never leads to happiness; that is why so many people are unhappy.

9. In the last days men would be proud.

II Timothy 3 : 2.

How many today are so proud of their intellect that they think they know better than God. The destructive criticism of God's Word in the last fifty years by men who are proud of their own intellect and learning has done grave harm in turning many men to infidelity and in bringing the Bible into disrepute with the great mass of people who have now become indifferent to the claims of Christ.

10. In the last days there would be blasphemers.

We know that there has been much blasphemy and profanity in previous times; but there is no doubt that there has been a great increase of it in our own day. Bad language seems to be much more common today: we have only to compare the novels of today with those of the last century, and we can see what a change for the worse has come to so many of the present-day authors. Christians in factories, shops, industries of all kinds are constantly forced to hear vile language and the Name of our Lord is being constantly taken in vain by men who think nothing of it.

11. In the last days children would be disobedient to their parents.

How many parents have complained that they can do

nothing with their children. This is probably due more than anything else to the bad example of parents and to their failure to seek to bring their children up in the fear of God. But certainly it is a marked feature of life today. All these prophecies about the last days which are now being given are found in II Timothy, Ch. 3.

12. In the last days people would be unthankful.

II Timothy 3 : 2.

It can be frequently noticed what ingratitude people shew today. There is very much complaint and grumbling, but few are found with a thankful spirit. The reason for this is surely that when a person departs from God and goes his own way he becomes completely blind to the goodness of God and no longer thanks Him as the Giver of all good things.

13. In the last days people would be unholy.

II Timothy 3 : 2.

We cannot expect any holiness from the great mass of unconverted folk. But it is sad to find among so many professing Christians that no attempt is made to seek after a holy walk; among those who have experienced the second birth, there seem to be very few who desire to honour God in all their ways.

14. In the last days there would be a sad lack of natural affection.

II Timothy 3 : 3.

J. B. Phillips translate this: "They will be utterly lacking in normal human affections." Home life has been so broken up today that it has been a very common thing to meet young persons who have no respect or love for their own parents.

15. In the last days men would be trucebreakers.

II Timothy 3 : 3.

We can think of treaties signed by world leaders in World War I, which were regarded as worthless scraps of paper. How often have people for the sake of expediency broken their pledged word.

16. In the last days men would be fierce.

II Timothy 3 : 3.

Can the world ever forget the fierce, ruthless conduct of such world leaders as Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini? The vast number of those who followed so enthusiastically their evil leadership only emphasises how wide their influence has been.

17. In the last days men would be despisers of those that are good.

II Timothy 3 : 3.

The leaders of Soviet Russia have again and again shewn their contempt for Christian virtues, love, kindness, pity, etc. These modern ruthless dictators have despised those who have aimed at goodness and their godless example has been followed by multitudes of people.

18. In the last days men would be traitors.

II Timothy 3 : 4.

In the last war there were very many instances of vile treachery. Children betrayed their parents and parents their children. We have read in our daily papers how some of our greatest scientists have been persuaded to work secretly for our enemies, and thus to betray their country.

19. In the last days men would be heady and highminded.

II Timothy 3 : 4.

J. B. Phillips translates it "self-willed and conceited." Our modern dictators have been carried away by their possession of power. The lust of authority has made them blind to their own shortcomings: they have gloried in their selfish desires, and their power has made them think too highly of themselves.

20. In the last days men would be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

II Timothy 3 : 4.

Can this be denied about our national conduct today?

While many of our churches have been almost empty, queues of people have been lining up for the Sunday cinemas.

Sunday is no longer regarded by the great majority of our people as the day which belongs to God, a day which is to be set apart for the worship and service of God. It is now treated just as a holiday. Cars in the summer stream down our main roads heading for a day at the seaside where they forget God and seek, not His pleasure, but their own enjoyment. A vast amount of money and time is spent on sport, and men who one day must stand before God and give an account of their lives to Him are not prepared to give Him any time at all and are making no preparation for the next world.

21. In the last days men would have a form of godliness but would deny the power of it.

II Timothy 3 : 5.

Or, as J. B. Phillips translates it: "They will maintain a facade of religion, but their conduct will deny its validity."

How many there are who have been baptized into the Christian faith, and look upon themselves as Christians, when they shew no evidence whatever of any change of heart. Vast crowds at our great soccer matches will join in the community singing "Abide with me" who have no desire at all for the Christ of God to control their lives. Profession of Christianity without any reality is one of the most common and dangerous delusions of our day. Our Lord said: "By their fruits ye shall know them," and "Not everyone that saith unto Me: 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven." If men are to be judged by their actions then a great number of professing Christians have only an empty profession, and know nothing of the power of God in their lives.

22. In the last days professing Christians will give way to their lusts with silly women.

II Timothy 3 : 6.

Following on from the previous text the apostle Paul goes on to write as follows:—"For of this sort (i.e., these people who have an empty profession) are they which creep

into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts."

A great deal of immorality is being carried on today by people who would be much startled if anyone were to say that they were not Christians. In many circles today immorality is no longer regarded as sin, but is looked upon as a mark of self-expression which ought not to be condemned. Such is the tragic twisting of God's laws which tries to make out that black is white, when they know that their conscience condemns them.

23. In the last days people will not endure sound doctrine.
II Timothy 4 : 3.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine (Marginal rendering: "healthful teaching").

People want to hear what they would like to believe. They do not want to hear or read about God's wrath, or about Hell, or God's judgment on sin. They do not want to hear anything which will make them feel uncomfortable, anything which will disturb their false peace. They prefer to make up a God of their own and give him their allegiance rather than humble themselves before the revelation of God in Holy Scripture. They are quite content to deceive themselves. As one heard a man on the air only a few days ago, "I could not believe in a God who did that," referring to something the Bible teaches that God does.

24. In the last days people will lap up all sorts of new doctrine.

"After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." II Timothy 4 : 3. J. B. Phillips puts it well in modern language thus:—"They will want something to tickle their own fancies, and they will collect teachers who will pander to their own desires." We see how very true this is of religious life at the present time. In the last hundred years the world has experienced a tremendous influx of new sects; new religions have been springing up everywhere to suit the minds of people who crave for something new. Theosophy and re-incarnation;

Jehovah's Witnesses or Russellism; Christadelphianism; Mormonism; Seventh-day Adventism; British-Israelism; Christian Science; Unitarianism; Spiritism, etc. People rush for that which appeals to their unregenerate minds regardless as to whether it is true to the Bible or not. God says in the Bible in Isaiah 8 : 20, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them," or as the R.V. puts it, "Surely there is no morning for them." Our Lord in His ministry on earth continually appealed to the authority of Holy Scripture. 'What saith the Scripture?' 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' 'How read ye?' 'Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' 'Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and are they which testify of Me.' Some of these many "isms" have a good deal of truth in them, and most of them quote Scripture profusely; but many of them deny the Deity of our Lord, and do not believe in any salvation by His atonement on the cross and thus lead people into grievous error. However, the point we are seeking to prove is very clear, i.e., that people of our generation are lapping up all sorts of new doctrine.

25. In the last days people shall turn away from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.

II Timothy 4 : 4.

J. B. Phillips translates it thus:—"They will no longer listen to the Truth, but will wander off after man-made fictions." There is indeed a great neglect of the Bible in England today. Fifty years ago a copy of the Holy Scriptures would be found in most British homes; but today it is not so. At a certain court in England where a case was being tried they required a copy of the Bible for the oath of a witness. They could not find a Bible in court, and a man was sent to borrow one. It is said that he had to go to twelve houses before he was able to borrow a Bible. All kinds of man-made fictions are taking the place of the incomparable Book.

That which fallible men say and write is so often treated as authoritative; whereas the Word of the living God, the

Bible, is despised and put on one side as completely out of date and unworthy of careful study. Men prefer to put their trust in astrology and Moore's Almanack rather than trust the Book which has been such a wonderful light and comfort to the people of God all down the long centuries. It is sadly true today that vast numbers of people do not want to listen to the Truth, but are prepared to spend time and trouble in their study of literature of some religious sect which appeals to the natural mind, but is in reality man-made fiction.

Now the writer can almost hear some of his readers say, "You are giving us a most depressing picture of the last days. Everything you write about it speaks of failure and evil. Is it not possible to give us a brighter picture of the closing days of this present age?"

This does not profess to be the writer's statement of the last days: it is only what God has chosen to reveal in His Word concerning the characteristics of the end-time. So many things about which we would be inclined to boast and glory, God has nothing to say; but it seems to be clear that God does want us to see that the reason for this colossal trouble which is coming upon the world is man's foolish departure from the Word of God, and his determination to go his own way regardless of God's will for his life.

However, there is one good thing which God declares would be done at the end-time, and that is:—

26. In the last days the Gospel would be proclaimed throughout the whole world.

Our Lord said in Mark 13: 10: "The Gospel must first be published among all nations." And again in Matthew 24: 14, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

It is a most interesting fact to notice that in a period of the world when evil and departure from God and His Word have been such a marked feature, such great ungodliness and wickedness has coincided with an extraordinary increase in the spread of the Gospel to the farthest ends

of the earth. Who would have ever thought that this would be the case? Yet in our own generation we have seen it happen. It is only about 150 years ago that our great Missionary societies were founded and the Church began to take seriously to heart the great task of sending the Gospel to heathen nations. In the last fifty years there has been an enormous extension in missionary endeavour which has resulted in a host of God's servants giving their lives to God and going abroad to proclaim to those who have never heard the saving message of God's redeeming love. Very many new missionary societies have been formed in Britain, in America, and in other countries to take the Gospel of Christ to those who are still in darkness. There is no doubt that there are still great numbers of people who have not heard the Good News, and yet we can surely say in a general sense that the Gospel has now been proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the earth. This most certainly could not have been said 100 years ago; but it can be said today. God's Word is being fulfilled in our own day.

27. In the last days many would travel far and wide.

In Daniel 12: 4 we read words which God spoke to Daniel about the closing days of this present age, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro."

Here another mark of the last days is given. Never before in the history of the world have so many people travelled far and wide as they are doing today. We realise that this ability to travel in so many different countries has only been made possible by the invention of transport by steam and motor. Railways and good roads which have now been made all over the world have made it possible for people to travel great distances in ease and comfort. Distances which a hundred years ago would necessitate many months to accomplish with much hardship can now be undertaken in a few days, or by aeroplane in a few hours. So we find that in our day far more people are availing themselves of these new modern facilities and are going to far distant parts of the world with great ease and enjoyment. But God foretold to Daniel three thousand

years ago that this would happen in the last days, and we have seen it come to pass in these modern days.

28. In the last days there would be a great advance in science.

In that same verse quoted above, Daniel 12 : 4, it ends by saying : "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

The extraordinary discoveries and inventions of the last hundred years have changed our whole mode of living. We live in marvellous comfort and luxury today compared with the life our forefathers lived. The discoveries of gas, electricity, motor-cars, telephone, wireless, television, chloroform, wonderful new drugs, and hosts of other remarkable inventions have made life today completely different from what it was 100 years ago.

In our day and generation knowledge has been increased to an amazing extent. As a result of this tremendous efforts are being made to provide a far better education for the young people of today than that which our fathers received. But with all their brain power today our clever men do not realise that education alone cannot uplift the world; they do not see that because man is born with an evil heart all the education given by clever men cannot uplift him morally and spiritually. What men so desperately need are good desires and a right will, a readiness to go God's way and to obey His commandments, and these most needy things cannot be obtained by education. Sinful man must be reconciled to a Holy God, and through the Gospel of Christ he can receive a new heart and a Divine Life. Only then can he put his education to good use. To educate a criminal when he has no change of heart will only enable him to put his knowledge to a bad use; it will give him greater knowledge and skill for his criminal desires. One of the gravest dangers we are facing with this increase of knowledge in material things is to educate the heathen without giving them the Gospel of Christ which alone can change their hearts.

The increased knowledge of the Russian people today without a faith in God or the Bible is making their country

a menace to the whole world. We must pray for that day when the Lord shall come in His glory and be acknowledged as King over the whole earth, when the earth shall be full of the best knowledge of all, the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. This is the knowledge that men so vitally need today.

29. In the last days the wise would understand.

Daniel hears the Man clothed in linen speak of the day when all these things shall be finished; and Daniel says to him : "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And in Chapter 12 : 9 and 10, the reply is given thus :—"Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified and made white; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Certainly very many Christians today are being purified and made white and tried. The concentration and labour camps have been an experience of tremendous testing for great numbers of people; many in the hour of physical suffering have cried to God for light and comfort and have found a deep peace in putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. They have been most sorely tried; but their trial has been the means of great spiritual blessing for which they will praise God throughout the ages of eternity. Here we learn too that at the end-time the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of them shall understand. Those who are acting with cruelty and oppression, whose minds are set on wrongdoing, take no interest in God's plan for the world; they completely fail to understand what God is doing in the world today; with regard to the future all is guess work; they have thrown away the torch of God's Truth, and stumble in the darkness without a light; they just fail to understand. This verse in Daniel ends thus : "But the wise shall understand." There are very many of God's children today who have a very clear understanding of the days in which we are living; they know from the precious Word of God which they are continually studying that the signs of our Lord's return in Glory are all around us now;

they know that the end of the age is close upon us and that the Lord is soon coming to take His waiting people home; they know from the Scriptures that a period of dire trouble must soon come for the world, but they rejoice in the certainty that Christ is coming to put this dark world right and to establish His Kingdom on the earth. Yes, indeed, those who have learned Divine wisdom from God's pure Word do understand very much about the things which God is intending to do. God's prophetic Word is being fulfilled today: the wise do understand.

30. In the last days cars would speed along our roads with blazing lights.

We read in the book of the prophet Nahum, in Chapter 2: 3: "The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of His preparation."

Motor-cars have only been upon our roads for about sixty years. Today they speed along our highways at night-time with their large headlights revealing the road for a long distance ahead of them. Nothing like it has been seen in the world until our own time; but now it is a most common sight and nobody thinks anything of it. But the prophecy written 2,000-3,000 years ago said that it would take place in the day of His preparation. Has not God in our generation been preparing the world for that stupendous Divine intervention which we believe must very soon take place? We believe the stage is now being prepared by God for the last scene of the final act of this Gospel age.

According to this prediction given to us through Nahum we see today motor-cars with flashing head-lights in the day when God is preparing the world for the Day of the Lord's coming, and again we stand in awe at the fulfilment of Holy Scripture.

31. In the last days cars would rush close by other cars with tremendous speed.

In the same passage as the quotation above, in the next verse, in Nahum, Chapter 2: 4, we find these words: "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against

another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like lightnings."

This text gives us two fresh thoughts about the cars on the roads in the end-time. They will run very close to one another, and they shall run with great speed. We all know how true these facts are about road travel today. Cars rush by one another going at 60 or 70 miles an hour. What would people of sixty years ago have thought had they seen our roads today and had they known the number of people killed on our roads every year? Surely they would have thought us mad to allow the roads to become the death-traps which they are today.

God's Word is being fulfilled before our eyes every day.

32. In the last days there would be great immorality and uncleanness.

We have already seen that our Lord likened the days of Noah to the days which would directly precede His coming in Glory. But in Luke 17: 28 to 30, He tells His hearers that "As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

The point that our Lord is here emphasizing is that men will be engaged in their ordinary occupations right up to the actual time of God's judgments on the nations; and that in the same day when a great escape from the coming judgment takes place through the intervention of God, on the very day of that escape God will begin His great judgments on the earth. "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." This is surely what our Lord is indicating, that as soon as His people are taken up to be with Him, He will begin to pour out His anger upon the nations.

We feel it is only right that we should consider why this special judgment came upon the people of Sodom and the

cities of the plain. We know it came for their great immorality and uncleanness.

Homo-sexuality was very prevalent in Sodom before God destroyed the city. Today this unnatural vice has now become such a dreadful menace in Britain that a commission has been formed to try and find the best way of dealing with this fearful problem.

Today we face a serious lowering of the moral standards of the whole nation. Canon Peter Green, writing in 1943 on the moral condition of Great Britain, states the matter thus: "It cannot be denied that, with respect to one branch of morality, a branch which is often spoken of as if it were the whole of morality, namely, sex morals, the Government is feeling grave anxiety; an anxiety supported by some very alarming statistics. For my own part," he goes on to write, "I am convinced that not merely in the matter of sex morals, but in every department of moral conduct, there is an alarming deterioration today as compared with two generations ago. Let it be granted that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century many people did wrong. What is alarming today is that they do the same things and deny that they are wrong, or go even further and deny that there is any objective standard of right and wrong binding on men and women."

Major Alister Smith sums up this matter thus: "Civilised nations become like Sodom and Gomorrah. Moral filth abounds. Our books, papers, cinemas and dance halls corrupt millions. Divorces sweep on like a flood, bearing on the wreckage of countless homes to a lost eternity. Babies are murdered before they are born. A sure sign of the end."

33. In the last days there would be many false religions and false christs.

We find our Lord saying in Matthew 24: 11: "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." And again in verse 24 of the same chapter, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Here we have one of the marks of the end-time. The world today abounds with false teachers and false Christs. We have already pointed out that many different cults have been springing up in this land and in other countries too during the last hundred years.

What the writer desires to emphasize here is that so many of these false sects present to us a false Christ.

Christian Science teaches that Jesus Christ is not God as He is said to have declared. In one of their magazines these words were read: "We must get rid of the fallacy that Jesus Christ is God." They teach that Christ is a Divine ideal.

Spiritualism declares that Jesus Christ was not Divine; but that He is now an advanced spirit in the sixth sphere.

Russellism, or as they now call themselves, "Jehovah's Witnesses," declare: "The man Jesus is dead, for ever dead. Jesus Christ was a man, nothing more nor less. The man Christ Jesus never rose from the dead."

Theosophy: "Jesus Christ gave to the world fragments of teaching of value as basis for world religion, as men did like Buddha, Confucius, Plato, Pythagoras," etc.

Mormonism: "Jesus was married at Cana to Mary and Martha. Joseph Smith is a descendant of Christ."

Modern Theology: "Jesus is the world's greatest ethical teacher; a man so good, his deluded followers took Him for a God. Jesus was Divine; and in the same sense all are Divine."

Romanism and Anglo-Catholicism teach that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for the sins of the world; but the further sacrifice of Christ for sins in the Mass is necessary; and absolution must be obtained through the priest in the Confessional.

In all these man-made religions there is much teaching which differs from the teaching of God's Word, and a false Christ is presented to people.

34. In the last days a general slumber would come over the professing church.

In the parable of the virgins we read in Matthew 25: 5, "While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and

slept." The virgins all went out to meet the bridegroom; but his long delay made them all tired and sleepy, and so instead of watching they all fell asleep. The long delay of our Lord in the keeping of His promise to come again has made the professing church careless and heedless about His return in Glory, and we have ceased to watch; and many professing Christians have given up believing that He will fulfil His promise.

35. In the last days people would be aroused by hearing that the Lord's return is very near.

In that same parable of the ten virgins we read "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps."

When the Lord Jesus is about to come again to take His people up to Glory, a cry will go forth that His coming is now at hand, and many Christians will be aroused out of their spiritual slumber to see that their lamps are burning, i.e., that they are bearing their witness to their coming Lord.

In the first world war, when Palestine was being set free from the domination of Turkey, some of our Christian leaders in England felt convinced that the liberation of Palestine and of Jerusalem meant that we were now approaching the end of this age, and that therefore the return of our Lord Jesus was soon to take place. So these leaders came together for prayer and decided to found "The Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement" to proclaim to the world their conviction that the Lord Jesus was soon coming again to glorify His people and to set up His Kingdom on this earth, and to call on people everywhere to prepare for His coming.

Ever since that year 1917 monthly meetings have been held in London under the auspices of this Advent Movement. Much literature has been written on this subject; enthusiastic meetings in many countries have been held. Now there are multitudes of people all over the world who firmly believe that the coming of our Lord is at hand and are seeking to make this glorious truth known far and wide.

The Word of the living God is indeed being fulfilled in the world today.

36. In the last days there would be a return of the evil cult of spiritism.

We find a solemn prophetic warning of this in I Timothy 4: 1 and 2: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Mr. Oswald Sanders writes thus on this subject: "One baneful outcome of World War I was the recrudescence of Spiritism—the attempt to hold communication with the spirits of the dead. In those tragic days there were myriads of tables with an empty chair, and scarcely a home without a broken heart over a son, husband or lover who had failed to return. To the wistful heart Spiritism held out some prospect of communion with the loved one. Now that World War II is over, such conditions are being repeated, and we desire to raise a sympathetic and yet strong warning, lest any in their hour of sorrow and bereavement, turn to the wrecker's lights of Spiritism, instead of to the God of all comfort."

The warning of Holy Scripture on this dangerous cult is very strong. We read of God's command to the children of Israel about it in Deuteronomy 18: 10 and 12, as follows: "There shall not be found among you anyone who maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee."

Those who dabble in Spiritism and get into touch with mediums are being deceived by the demons of Satan; for these demons pretend that they are the departed spirits of people. They impersonate the dead and thus deceive the living. Many people have been driven out of their minds by consulting these evil spirits. There are today very many

places for meeting these spirits all over London; in all our great cities up and down the country, and in many other lands, too. Isaiah writes thus in Chapter 8: 19 and 20: "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."

This terrible and dangerous cult is one of the many things which prove our disregard of God's Word and warn us of the approaching judgments of our God.

Here we must now end our survey of predictions in the Bible concerning religious and social life in the last days.

As in our two previous sections on international affairs and on the Jewish people we must try and gather these points together, so that their full cumulative force may be brought home to our minds.

Here in this wonderful Book, the Bible, we are given in great detail a vivid picture of the last days of this present age, that time in the history of the world which directly precedes the promised return of our Saviour in Glory.

We have the surest proof that these predictions we have been studying date back to the first century after the birth of Christ and so were written nearly two thousand years ago.

Could anyone have imagined or guessed that after nineteen hundred years of proclaiming the Gospel entrusted to the early disciples by our Lord Jesus, the world would now be in the state that it is in today? When we consider that in a comparatively short space of time the strongest Empire the world has ever known was conquered by the preaching of the Gospel, and publicly renounced its pagan worship in favour of the Christian Faith, we would never have thought it possible from the human standpoint that the world would be so incredibly wicked and the professing church so corrupt after all these centuries. But we have lived to see the day when all these unlikely predictions have been most accurately fulfilled. Who but God could know what would happen to the world after nineteen centuries?

Surely we have here the clearest proof that this Book, the Bible, is the inspired Word of God? Let us enumerate what God has foretold concerning the religious and social life of the world in the last days.

As we have seen, it is predicted in the New Testament that in the last days there would be great conflict between Capital and Labour; that there would be great evil and violence in the world; that there would be great indifference and ignorance; that there would be mockers and scoffers; that God's commandments would be broken on every side; that the love of many would wax cold; that perilous times would come; that men would be self-centred, proud, blasphemers; that children would be disobedient to their parents; that people would be unthankful, unholy, and would lack natural affection; that men would be truce-breakers, fierce, despisers of those that are good; they would be traitors, heady and high-minded; they would be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; and would have the outward form of Godliness without experiencing its inward power; professing Christians would give way to their lusts with sinful women; people would not endure sound doctrine; people would lap up all sorts of new doctrine; people would turn away from the Truth and would trust men's fallible opinions; the Gospel would be proclaimed throughout the whole world; many would travel far and wide; there would be a great advance in science; the wise would understand the Scriptures; cars would speed along our roads with blazing lights; cars would rush by other cars with tremendous speed; there would be great immorality and uncleanness; many false religions and false Christs would arise; a general slumber would come over the professing Church; some would be aroused by hearing that the Lord's return is very near; there would be a return of the evil cult of Spiritism. All these thirty-six features of social and Church life in the last days have been foretold in the Holy Scriptures. Quite a number of them have not had their fulfilment before these latter times; and all those features which have had a measure of fulfilment down the Christian era have appeared in a much more intensified form in the last forty years.

How tremendous and overwhelming are the signs which God has so graciously given us in His Word concerning these last days and the nearness of our Lord's return.

What signs did the people of Noah's day have of the coming judgment of the Flood? Apparently only the witness of one man, who was evidently regarded as a crank and foolish fanatic by the people of his day; and so they paid no heed to his reiterated warning. What signs did the people of Sodom have that God was about to destroy their city? Only the witness of one man, Lot, whose solemn and urgent warning was treated by his sons-in-law as a huge joke; for they regarded the idea that their city was about to be completely destroyed as a thing which was impossible, for they had never known such an overwhelming overthrow of one city to take place before. In comparison with the peoples of Noah's day and of Lot's day we have infinitely more solid ground for believing that God's judgments are close upon us. We have this unique Book, the Bible, God's inspired Word, which has stood the test of centuries, and is still the best seller today.

We have seen in our studies that in this remarkable Book we have been given by God at least 70-80 signs by which we can discern whether we are in the last days of this present age or not. We have noticed that every one of these marks of the last days are now in evidence before our eyes. Even men of the world who never read the Bible are convinced that we are swiftly approaching a world crisis of such a magnitude as we have never faced before.

To refuse to heed all these Divine warnings is to be blinded by Satan. For a motorist to refuse to heed the red light of warning on the road would be regarded by all sensible persons as an act of madness and extreme folly. But it is a far more serious act of folly when a traveller on the road to eternity refuses to take any notice of the red light of God's warnings. For our eternal welfare depends on our giving most earnest heed to that which God has to say to us.

What then do all these tremendous warnings from God's Word mean?

We believe that they mean that our great God is about

to intervene in the affairs of this world, in a far more startling way than in that far-off day when He sent His beloved Son into the world to die for our sins. His second coming, which we believe to be near at hand, will be very different: it will be with great majesty and glory.

Let us now turn to our last study and consider what God says about the future.

Part 3.

THE FUTURE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

These striking signs shew that we are now very near the end of this age. A time of severe trouble is about to come upon this sinful world.

Anyone who gives any thought to the world situation of today can visualise what is likely to take place within a few days of the outbreak of World War III. Should this dreaded calamity be forced on the world tomorrow, within the space of three days the whole world would probably be in a state of overwhelming chaos. For our great cities like London, New York, Birmingham, Moscow, Liverpool and Washington would be in ruins and millions of people destroyed in a moment of time. Within three days the world would become a ghastly place in which to live. All the joys and pleasures which this earth can now offer will at once be taken from men. Commerce and trade will be practically at a standstill. Those who are able to do so will try and make for some very remote part of the world in the hope of enjoying a measure of security; but the probability is that they will be destroyed by submarine or aeroplane before ever they reach their destination. In a very short time there will be a great shortage of food and millions are likely to die of starvation, and many who are able to live will only succeed by robbing others of their goods.

Crimes of all kinds are likely to be perpetrated on a wide scale, for the police force of our leading countries will have been so hit by this awful atomic warfare that they will not be able to cope with those who now feel free to commit what evil they like.

There will be such chaos and confusion in all the civilised countries of the world that men will not know which way to turn for help in the hour of their desperate need. So many factories and businesses will be unable to function any more, and millions of people will find that they are

out of work, and now have no income to provide for the need of their families. They may now have to depend either on begging from those who still have food and clothing or else they may steal by force. Lawlessness and anarchy are likely to prevail everywhere. The probability is that sickness and disease will be widespread and our hospitals will no longer be able to function.

A measure of some order will be attempted to try and deal with the uprisings of the hungry masses of people in each country; but it is probable that only those will succeed in obtaining any government of the unruly masses who put down disorder by armed force and set up a ruthless dictatorship.

In semi-pagan countries where people are being given education without the Christian Faith, it would seem probable that the uprising of the people will sweep away all government and order. Revenge on those who have oppressed them will sway the minds of the people who have suffered much from those who shewed them no mercy. It will be a day when might will prevail over right, and men will be brought to acknowledge their own helplessness.

Those who have not already thrown down this book with disgust will probably do so at this juncture, if they are able to read as far as this. They will surely say "What an extremely pessimistic picture you have drawn of the trouble of tomorrow; we admit that we are facing a grave crisis; but it will never be as bad as the picture you have given." And yet the writer ventures to think that if people carefully consider what scientists are writing about these terrible bombs which are now being made in ever-increasing power, they must come to the conclusion that a time of unsurpassed trouble and anguish is close upon the world; and if we do try and visualise in our minds what is likely to be the result of atomic warfare, can we picture a world less dreadful than the one which the writer has attempted to paint?

However, as we have sought to prove in this book, we have a more sure guide than our own thoughts or conjectures. We have this Book of books, the Bible, which not only throws light on the very state of the world today, but

it also foretells the sort of trouble which must soon come upon the world.

Peter writes in II Peter 1: 19: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn, and the Daystar arise in your hearts." Or as J. B. Phillips puts it in modern language: "The Word of prophecy was fulfilled in our hearing. You should give that word your closest attention, for it shines like a lamp amidst all the dirt and darkness of the world, until the Day dawns, and the Morning Star rise in your hearts."

Yes, the prophecies in God's Word shine like a lamp on the road before us. What does the Bible say about this coming day of trouble?

As we have already pointed out in another place, our Lord spoke of it in Matthew 24: 21 and 22: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

It must indeed be very severe if there is a real danger of all the inhabitants of the world being destroyed. This is a more drastic picture than the one drawn by the writer. What does Daniel write about it in his prophecy? Daniel writes in Ch. 12: 1: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the Book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel is in complete agreement with the words of our Lord and teaches us clearly that this trouble comes at the end of this age, at a time of resurrection from the dead. What does the Psalmist David write about it? We read in Psalm 11: 5 and 6: "The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth. Upon the wicked He shall rain snares (Margin: "Quick burning coals"), fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest (Margin: "A burning

tempest"): this shall be the portion of their cup." What does Solomon write? We read in Proverbs 1: 24 to 27. It is God speaking: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."

David in Psalm 11 seems to be writing of atomic warfare, a time when the bombs shall fall on a wicked world. Solomon writes of the calamity, fear, desolation, destruction and anguish which are going to come on a world that has refused to listen to His Word.

What does Isaiah say? Isaiah 24: 4 to 6: "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."

Although this declaration is seemingly written about the past, yet many students of prophecy like Dr. C. I. Scofield have held that in this chapter we are looking at the severe trouble on the earth which directly precedes the coming of our Lord to set up His Kingdom. One sure indication that this interpretation is right is the word "burned": Never before our day have the people of the world been in danger of *total* destruction by fire.

Jeremiah, what have you to tell us about this coming trouble?

Jeremiah 23: 19 and 20: "Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until He have executed, and till He hath performed the thoughts of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly."

A whirlwind comes very suddenly, and while it lasts it is one of the most destructive forces of nature. It causes

immense damage in a very short space of time. This whirlwind from God is to be experienced "in the latter days." We can now see the terrifying signs of its approach.

Zephaniah, what have you to say about it? In Zephaniah 1: 14 to 18 we read as follows: "The great Day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the Day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land."

If any readers of these words think that this refers to the judgments of the Babylonian captivity or of the Roman punishment of the Jews, please consider the context and notice that the next chapter is dealing with the return of the Jews at the close of this present age, which return is immediately to precede that time of terrible world anguish now, we believe, so close at hand.

Some of my readers may be saying "Please stop it; we cannot face reading more about such dire calamity; it is too dreadful to contemplate."

However unpleasant the reading of these prophecies may be, God has evidently meant them to be read and studied by His people, otherwise they would not be inserted in His inspired Word. Our grave danger lies in not receiving the warning God has given us, and in thinking that we know better than God as to what will transpire in the days which lie ahead.

Now there is much disagreement among students of prophecy as to whether Christians will have to go through this great anguish and suffering which we believe is now

close upon us; in fact, the writer believes that it is so possible that there will not be time for this book to go into print, because our Lord's coming may be so near.

There seem to be a number of important passages which would suggest that no deliverance will come for the Church of Christ until our Lord comes with His people to establish His Kingdom on earth. If this is true we cannot look for His coming now, and must wait the day when this world tribulation will be brought to an end by the appearance of our Lord to deliver His nation Israel when they are attacked by the Northern confederation of Gentile nations.

But there are other passages of Scripture which support the belief of many of the Lord's people that before this time of terrible trouble takes place, the Lord is going to remove from the earth His own people, and will at the same time give them their glorified bodies and take them up into the heavenly sphere.

It seems clear from the Scriptures that there is a separate judgment for Christians before they share with Christ in the Marriage-supper of the Lamb when the whole Church of Christ will rejoice together with our Divine Lord in the victory won on Calvary, and in all the triumphs of His grace on behalf of His servants.

The writer finds it hard to understand when these two great events, the Judgment-seat of Christ and the Marriage-supper of the Lamb, are going to take place, unless it is going to be at the time when this severe trouble is taking place on earth.

And there are a number of verses in the Bible which do seem to teach that our Lord is coming to uplift and glorify His own servants before this predicted whirlwind from God works such devastation and desolation on earth. Let us note a few of them.

Our Lord says in Matthew 24: 44, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." He tells us that His coming will not be expected by His people at the time when He does come.

But surely if He does not come until the battle of Armageddon in Palestine all His people would be expecting Him then?

Again our Lord says in Luke 21 : 36, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

This certainly appears to teach that some people are going to escape the coming trouble by being taken before the Lord Jesus in Heaven.

We have also our Lord's message to the Church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3 : 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from (Greek : 'out of') the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly : Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This seems again a clear promise that some are going to be removed from the world before that severe time of trouble breaks out.

We find a number of passages in the Old Testament which inform us that these coming judgments are going to fall on the head of the wicked; such as Psalm 11 : 6 and Jeremiah 23 : 19 : this seems to suggest that God's people will not be on earth when those judgments come.

Again, how can we "live looking" for our Lord's return as we are bidden to do in Titus 2 : 12 and 13, if we know that He cannot come until the attack from the North takes place?

The two illustrations which our Lord uses in reference to His coming again seem to suggest that before the judgments break out on a guilty world, God will put into safety those who belong to Him.

In the case of Noah, before the Flood descended, God said to Noah : "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." And we read in Genesis 7 : 16, "And the Lord shut him in." Noah and his family were shut into safety within the ark by God before this severe judgment was experienced by a godless world. Our Lord said in Matthew 24 : 39, "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Then again, with regard to Lot, before God overthrew the cities of the plain with brimstone and fire, He first brought out from Sodom Lot, his wife and two daughters :

when Lot asked if they might take refuge in a certain city, the Lord said to him : "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." The impending destruction which was about to be executed on the cities of the plain was withheld until Lot and his family had been removed from Sodom. Our Lord's comment on this in Luke 17 : 29 and 30 was, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." If the end of this age is to resemble the story of Lot's escape, then it would appear most probable that the Lord will remove His people from the earth before the nations experience the wrath of God for their treatment of Him and His Word.

Paul writes in I Thessalonians 5 : 9, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

It would seem that the "wrath" mentioned here refers to the earthly judgments of God which come upon the world prior to the Lord's advent to set up His Kingdom; if this be so, then it is a clear proof that God is not going to permit His redeemed people to go through this time of fearful trouble; but He has appointed them to obtain that full salvation, i.e., salvation from the very presence of sin at the coming of the Lord in the air for His people; and thus, by that upward flight to meet the Lord in the air, they will escape those great earthly judgments which the writer believes must shortly come upon the world. In Zephaniah 2 : 1 to 3, where God is speaking of His fierce anger which must come on the world after many of the people of Israel have been brought back to their own land, He adds these words : "Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness : it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Here is another indication that some will escape that time of intense tribulation.

However, in view of the fact that many ripe saints of God have held the opposite view and believe that God's children will pass through this unique period of history we dare not be dogmatic. Whatever God chooses to do we

must go on trusting Him and seek to bring glory to His Name.

We are now about to consider the third part of this book, which is "The Future Fulfilment of Prophecy." We have now finished with the study of some of those prophecies of the Bible which have already had their clear fulfilment in history. If such amazing Biblical predictions have already been fulfilled in past history, and if there are so many which are being fulfilled before our eyes today (we have been considering over seventy of them), how deeply concerned we should be with regard to the prophecies which up to the present have not had any fulfilment. For all these many predictions, fulfilled and unfulfilled, are all bound up together in this great Book which has been the light and comfort to the children of God for so many centuries.

If we are convinced, as surely we must be, that history has proved the truth of these Biblical prophecies again and again, prophecies given by different writers in different places, at different times, under different circumstances, it would surely be very illogical on our part if we did not believe that the predictions which as yet have had no fulfilment, must be verified by history in the days to come, in as definite and accurate a manner as those which have been fulfilled in the past or are being fulfilled today. The writer does want to stress this point. For we are about to think of certain future events which in the eyes of the world are utterly preposterous and fantastic. When we speak of them and tell the ordinary man of the world that we believe they will surely come to pass, he thinks that we have gone out of our minds to proclaim such fantastic things, and pours his scorn on the prophetic Scriptures and treats the whole matter as a huge joke. This was the way that the people in Noah's day treated his God-given warning that a flood was coming to drown the world because of the people's sin in the sight of God. As our Lord said in Matthew 24 : 39 : "They knew not till the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The people evidently derided Noah and treated him as a man who had serious delusions; but Noah was right and the people were all wrong. This was the way

that Lot's sons-in-law treated Lot's announcement that God was about to judge and overthrow the cities of the plain. When Lot said to them : "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city," he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. In other words, they treated his warning as a huge joke and roared with laughter. "Poor old Lot has gone crazy" was probably what they said. Yet Lot was right, and they and all the people of Sodom were wrong. This most unlikely event did happen, and Sodom was utterly destroyed a few hours later. Our Lord's comment on this very severe judgment was as follows : "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

In both cases something new and very startling was announced as a message from God; in both cases it was something which had never taken place before in the history of the world. In both cases the warning was mocked and disregarded. In both cases the judgment did take place according to God's warning, and our Lord says that history is going to repeat itself at the close of this present age.

The events that we are about to consider may seem very fantastic and startling to men of the world; but nevertheless we reject the warning of God at our peril. What this Book says that God is going to do in the future will be as surely fulfilled in history as all the other predictions. Because it is something quite new which God will soon do, because we have never experienced such a thing in the world before, because it is a stupendous miracle which will soon take place, it must not be rejected on such grounds as these; for these things were all true in Noah's day and in Lot's day : the revelation from God which they heard was something quite new; it had never been experienced in the world before; they were both miraculous in their character. And yet, because God foretold them, they came to pass, in spite of the fact that the majority of people in their days refused to believe the revelation.

Some of my readers may say : "Only a very small pro-

portion of professing Christians believe as you do about these things; we prefer to believe as the majority of people do, that the world is going to get better and better until man has brought about the Millennial kingdom by his own efforts." If this is truly your conviction, then you are choosing to go right against the clear predictions of God concerning the way in which this present age will end. In the light of the days of Noah and those of Lot, and of our Lord's comments, you will be found siding with the ignorant, unbelieving majority, and like the people of their day you will only wake up to know that you were wrong when it is too late and you have lost your opportunity.

With these few words of earnest warning, let us now turn to the study of these great future events which seem so imminent to some of God's people today.

It has been suggested in these pages that it is very probable that before the great world trouble breaks out, God will first remove from the world His own redeemed people in a moment of time.

It seems to be quite clear from the Scriptures that the first startling act of Divine intervention which takes place at the end of this age will be the upward flight of the children of God to meet the descending Lord in the air as He comes for His own people. Ah, this is just what some readers of this book will regard as fantastic. Why? Just because it has never happened before, so they would tell us. Where are we taught in the Bible about this? Paul, in writing to the Lord's people in Thessalonica, gives them some very clear teaching to comfort them concerning the resurrection of believers at the coming of our Lord. We will quote the whole passage, but please notice that Paul is claiming that this coming mighty miracle is not his own idea, but was a revelation from God; it is what God declares is going to come to pass. The passage is found in I Thessalonians 4: 13 to 18, and is as follows: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the

Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or as it means 'precede') them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." "This I say unto you by the Word of the Lord." Here is Paul's authority for writing such a stupendous statement; he had received it as a revelation from God. Many have tried to spiritualise this profound revelation; they have tried to make out that it does not really mean what it says. Why do they say that? Just because they believe that such a miracle as this is not possible or likely. But our God has unlimited power and wisdom; and He so often delights to do what seems impossible and unlikely.

Man has now found the way to send forth a satellite up into the sky which will travel round the world at terrific speed many times: but because God declares that He is going to do something in the heavens which man is unable to do, man dares to say of the great God who created him and has given him the ability to do what he has done, that our almighty God is unable to do such a thing, and that we need not think that it is likely to happen. Such is the folly and pride of human beings, even men of great intellect, who would bring their Creator down to their own limitations.

The Bible records two instances of men who have lived on this earth and were taken to Heaven without dying: the two men were Enoch and Elijah. Now what our God can do for two men He can just as easily do for two million men. Our Lord also ascended up into Heaven forty days after His resurrection; and His disciples have borne their witness to this miracle. This upward flight through the air by the people of God into the Lord's Presence above is indeed a mighty miracle; and it is this great event which so many of God's redeemed people are expecting will take place in the very near future. But

this great miracle is going to be accompanied by other miracles at the same time. This wonderful passage in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians informs us that "The dead in Christ shall rise first"; so not all the dead are going to rise together; only "The dead in Christ will rise" then. Our Book of Common Prayer speaks of "a general resurrection"; but the Bible does not. In Revelation 20 : 6 we read : "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." This first resurrection is therefore the great privilege of those who, while they were on earth, turned from their sins to the Lord and were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Such will be raised from the dead when our Lord comes in the air for His own; and so the Lord will bring them with Him in their risen and glorified bodies as He descends from Heaven. As this passage tells us : "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Then as our Lord descends from Heaven with a shout He will call His waiting people on earth to Himself; and in a moment His people will respond like steel to a magnet and ascend up into His Presence in the air; their mortal bodies will be instantaneously transformed and glorified; we shall meet again our dear ones who died in Christ; and above all we shall see the Saviour Himself, the One who so greatly loved us that He gave His precious life to redeem us from our sins, and then as the apostle writes, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

What a splendour and magnificence there is about these glorious coming events which are going eventually to usher in the new golden age for this poor sin-cursed earth.

It is no wonder that Paul in writing to Titus speaks of it thus in chapter 2, verse 13 : "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

But we must remind ourselves that just as there will be a separation amongst the dead when our Lord comes, so there is going to be a separation amongst those who are

living on the earth at that time. Not everyone will be caught up when Christ comes, but only those who belong to Christ, and have been redeemed to God by His atoning death. The passage clearly states "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up." The word "remain" surely speaks of those who are still in this world when He comes; we believe the word "alive" means those who are spiritually "living" when He comes.

Now this matter of being "spiritually alive" is of supreme importance, for without this spiritual life we cannot be taken up into glory when the Saviour comes. Many people have religion who have never experienced a new spiritual life. There are very many professing Christians who have been baptized as infants who think they are all right and yet have never entered into God's Kingdom.

The Scriptures clearly teach us that we have all sinned and come short of God's Glory (Romans 3 : 23) : that we have all descended from our first parents, Adam and Eve, who chose to distrust God's Word and to disobey His command. As a result of this we have all inherited from them a sinful, rebellious and selfish nature. We have become spiritually dead through our sin; and our guilt in disobeying God and going our own way has brought us under condemnation. We are ruined and condemned before a holy God by our sin. But God in his great mercy and love has provided a way whereby we can all be reconciled to Him; we can receive the pardon of all our sins, and a new life from Heaven can come into us. This way of salvation which God has procured for all mankind is free for the sinner, but it was exceedingly costly for God : it cost our God the death of His well-beloved Son, who came down from Heaven to die for our sins on the Cross at Calvary. God has declared in His Word that by His death for us He has atoned for the sins of the whole world, and by that one sacrifice on Calvary God's sinless Son has satisfied God's holy law and has made it possible for the worst of sinners to receive a perfect pardon, and a new spiritual life. When does a sinner receive this complete forgiveness of sins and the

indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit? He receives these priceless gifts the very moment he turns from his sins and receives the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, as his own Saviour and Lord. All my readers who have done this have proved in their own experience that a new Life from above has come into them. How many passages there are in the Bible which emphasize the glorious fact and reality of this saving Gospel. Here are a few of them. Isaiah 53 : 5 and 6 : "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

I John 1 : 7 : "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us for all sin." Romans 5 : 8 to 10 : "But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His Life."

Our Lord said in Matthew 11 : 28 to 30 : "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Our Lord also said in John 3 : 16 and 17 : "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

We read in John 1 : 11 to 13 : "He (the Lord Jesus) came unto His own (i.e., His own nation), and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (Margin 'The right or privilege') to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on

His name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

No; it is not religion which can save us from the guilt of our sins; it is not by the outward form of the sacrament of baptism that we are redeemed; it is not by coming to church, or to the Holy Communion service that we can have the guilt of our sins put away; it is not by trying to build up a righteousness of our own that we can merit God's Salvation; for we read in Scripture that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight, and our salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast."

It is by none of these things that we can enter into rest, but only by the merits and atonement of Christ Jesus our Lord : we are not justified in God's sight partly by Christ's atoning death, and partly by our own efforts. No; it is by the atoning death of our Lord alone and through simple faith in Him that all our sins are fully and freely forgiven; and the very moment they are forgiven God creates within us a new life through the incoming of His Holy Spirit, and we are thus born from above and adopted into the Royal family of Heaven; we are made the children of God.

We still have sin within us, but, thank God, no longer is there sin upon us; no longer are we under condemnation, for by receiving Christ we have come "under grace," with a new Divine Life within us, and with a new standing before God. We still have sin within us and our temptations are just as strong as before, but the Presence of God by His Holy Spirit is now with us, and the more we yield up ourselves to the Spirit of God within us, and look to the living Lord Jesus, our Saviour, the more shall we experience the blessing and power of God in our lives.

Yes, we must turn away from our sins, and by simple faith receive the Son of God as Saviour and Lord; by this alone can we enter into this new Divine Life which God wants us to possess. Remember the Saviour's unbreakable promise in Revelation 3 : 20 : "Behold, I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him and he with Me." If anyone hears His voice and opens the door of their heart to Him, He comes in at once.

Reader, if you have been hearing the Lord speaking to you as you have been reading these lines, do what He bids you do, and God's light will break in on your soul, the dawn of a new and wonderful day for your soul.

Only those who have responded to the Saviour's call now will be able to respond to His call when He comes in His glory.

Only those who possess His Life now will possess that fuller life of Glory when He comes again.

Only those who are lifted up from the pit of sin now will be lifted up into the air to meet the Lord when He comes.

Only those who are being changed in their spirits now will be changed in their bodies at His coming.

If redeemed in our souls now, we shall experience the redemption of our bodies when the trumpet sounds.

Separated from the guilt of our sins now, we shall be separated from the very presence of sin at His coming in Glory.

What a blessed hope of splendour and magnificence God has given His people in His written Word; it should indeed make every Christian rejoice.

And this hope of His coming should exert a tremendous influence upon our lives as we look for His coming. We should carefully study and meditate upon I John 3 : 1 to 3, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him (set on Him) purifieth himself even as He is pure." By God's grace we must make this great hope a purifying hope till He comes.

Now some will be asking what is going to happen to the Lord's people after they have been caught up and glorified. The next event will surely be the judgment of the Lord's people in Heaven; it is called in the Scriptures "The Judgment-seat of Christ."

The chief references to it are in Romans 14 : 10 to 12, where we read : "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God," and II Corinthians 5 : 10 : "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This judgment cannot determine whether people will go to Heaven or Hell, because apparently it only concerns the children of God; for those who will appear before the Lord at this judgment have already been saved and glorified at the coming of our Lord. All the guilt of the sins of all God's people has been completely removed by the atoning blood of the Saviour before they appear before the Lord at this time; but clearly at this judgment the secrets of our hearts and all our Christian walk and service must be brought to light by the Lord; surely at this judgment all quarrels and misunderstandings between Christians will be examined and our Lord will adjudicate, and all that is wrong will be brought to light and will be put right. How much of our service at that day will not stand the test of that fiery judgment; much work will be burnt up because it was done from the wrong motive, for our glory and not for His Glory, for the eye of men and not for the eye of God. But all work and service that has been done with a single eye to His Glory, out of love for our Lord, in dependence on the power of His Spirit shall receive His "Well done" and His gracious reward. So we read in Revelation 22 : 12, "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

The next event after the Judgment-seat of Christ would seem to be the Marriage-supper of the Lamb, when our glorified Lord will celebrate with His redeemed and glorified people in Heaven the great victory He won for sinners by His sacrifice on the cross, and all the triumphs of His grace in the hearts of His redeemed people down the ages. This will celebrate the amazing and eternal union between our Lord and His purchased bride.

O how great is the privilege of all those who are present

at that scene of unimaginable splendour and exceeding great rejoicing in the courts of Glory. This is what God has chosen to reveal to us concerning it in His Word. Revelation 19: 7 to 9: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, write, Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God."

Now let us consider what is taking place on the earth at that same time. There are many Christians who believe that while these wonderful events are taking place in God's Glory above, that the scene on earth is vastly different. When our Lord was on earth He said to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world" and "Ye are the salt of the earth." When the light and the salt are both removed from the world in a moment of time, then the people who are left on the earth will immediately discover that spiritual darkness and moral corruption are their unhappy portion. Then will be fulfilled that most solemn passage in Zephaniah, Ch. 1: 17 and 18, where our great God says: "I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath." Again in Proverbs we read in Ch. 1: 30 to 32, "They would none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." This will be the time of unparalleled trouble for the nations, and especially for the Jews, as foretold in Jeremiah 30: 7, Matthew 24: 21, and in Daniel 12: 1. If our greatest cities are reduced to rubble in a few short days in the next world war, as seems most probable, then who can picture the colossal chaos which must result from such terrible destruction? Criminals will

find themselves free to do as they like, for everything will be disorganised. It will be impossible to supply the hungry masses with food; starvation and disease will add to the miseries of that terrible time, and it would seem probable that only military dictatorships will be able to bring about any order in a world where such great disorder will be prevalent. Is this too dark a picture? We think not in the light of so many warnings about this time of trouble in Holy Scripture.

One thing seems perfectly clear: it is that men are bringing this punishment from God upon them because of their refusal to heed God's warnings and to turn from their sins. Today God's ten commandments are despised; His Day is being desecrated; His Book, the Bible, is being neglected; His exalted Son, the Lord Jesus, Who died for our sins upon the cross, is being rejected by millions in this so-called Christian country; His Holy Spirit is being constantly resisted as He would seek to lead men back to God's ways; and His warnings are not being heeded. Can we wonder that if men refuse to listen to God's loving entreaties, God will adopt yet sterner measures. Yes, we must not blame our God; we are most definitely bringing this great trouble upon ourselves; and the only way of escape is to humble ourselves before God, and to seek with all earnestness and sincerity to go God's way and to give Glory to Him while yet there is time.

This time of severe tribulation will be used by God to break down the haughtiness of men and to make them see the folly of their own devices. For we read in Isaiah 26: 9 and 10: "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness."

Again, in Isaiah, Ch. 2, we read of the day when the Lord arises to shake terribly the earth, and we are told in verse 17 of the good effect which this time of severe chastening is going to have upon those who are living on the earth in that day: "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

Yes; the Gentile nations are to be brought very low before God in preparation for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on this earth (Daniel 2 : 31 to 45).

It is apparently at the close of this time of world trouble that Russia and her satellite nations make their great attack from the North on the land of Israel (Ezekiel 38 and 39). During this time of tribulation Israel will suffer acutely, probably through the attack of Egypt and the Arab nations (See Joel 3 : 19). The United Nations will probably intervene to save her from complete destruction and bring about a measure of security for the Jews, and then will come that overwhelming attack by the Northern nations, and the Jews in their utter helplessness will cry earnestly to God for mercy and deliverance (Joel Ch. 2) and the Lord will hear their cry and will come in His Glory to their deliverance, and the great Northern army will be utterly defeated (Ezekiel 39 and Zechariah 14). It is at that time that the Lord will reveal Himself to the Jews as their Messiah, their Saviour, and their King, and as a result of this a marvellous spiritual transformation will come over the whole Jewish nation, and the whole nation will be gloriously converted to God. Zechariah 12 : 9 to 14; Isaiah 66 : 5 to 13; Isaiah 60 : 1 to 3; Ezekiel 36 : 24 to 29; Romans 11 : 25 to 29. Then the Lord Jesus will dwell in the midst of His saved nation, and He will procure for them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame (Zephaniah 3 : 14 to 20). It is at this time that the Lord will establish His Kingdom on this earth, and the world will enter upon its golden age. Then will be fulfilled the promise of Gabriel to Mary, the mother of our Lord, at the time of the Saviour's birth, which is recorded in Luke 1 : 32 to 33. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Some would tell us that there is no future for Israel; that every prophecy concerning the greatness and glory of Israel in the future refers to the church; they would teach us that all these great predictions concerning Israel must be spiritualized and must refer to

the Lord's people now, i.e., His redeemed church. The writer is unable to agree with such an interpretation, for as he sees the matter, the church of Christ is completed, removed from this world, and glorified some time before the nation of Israel is delivered and converted to God. When our Lord comes in His Glory and His nation, Israel, is delivered and saved, it is the beginning of a new dispensation when our Lord will establish His Kingdom on earth and will reign for a thousand years.

This will be the time when our great adversary, Satan, is bound and will not be allowed to deceive the nations; when there will be peace and prosperity throughout the world, because the Lord will be ruling the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 19 : 15).

Psalm 72 most beautifully depicts the glories of that coming reign, when "He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him : all nations shall serve Him." (Verses 4 : 7, b and 11).

When our Lord comes from Heaven to deliver the Jews and to set up His Kingdom, He will bring His raised and glorified people with Him (Rev. 19 : 14; Jude 14 and 15) and His people will have the great privilege of sharing with Him in His millennial reign (Revelation 20 : 4; II Timothy 2 : 12; Rev. 5 : 10). But it would appear that it is the converted Jewish nation which is going to be mightily used by God during our Lord's reign on earth to bring very great blessing to the whole world. (Acts 15 : 14 to 18; Psalm 67; Isaiah 60 : 1 to 3; Isaiah 55 : 5; Isaiah 61 : 9.) Instead of the history of Israel being finished, their coming glory and usefulness in the service of our God has not yet begun. What could be clearer or more emphatic than God's word to Jeremiah in Ch. 31 : 35 and 36. "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light

by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is His Name: if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever."

We read in Revelation 20: 7 that when the thousand years reign has come to an end, Satan will be liberated and will be allowed to deceive the nations once more. This will be the last testing of the nations of the world under the very finest conditions when our Lord is reigning as King over the whole earth. Once again, it is proved that man is a failure; for Satan is able to gather a vast host together from the four quarters of the world, and this mighty force compasses the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, but fire comes down from Heaven and devours them. The Devil is then cast into the lake of fire, and then there comes the great final judgment, the Judgment of the great white throne. It is a judgment according to people's works, and whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Only those who possess Life because they possess Christ Jesus have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life; as the apostle John writes in I John 5: 12, "He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life." To seek and find the Son of God as our Lord and Saviour in our life on earth is to enjoy Him throughout the ages of eternity.

After this most solemn and final judgment there is a new heaven and a new earth; and the holy city, new Jerusalem, is seen coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Here is revealed to John the glory of the eternal state: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there

be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

In the last great chapter of the Bible we are thrice reminded that our Lord Jesus is coming quickly. The very last word we have from our glorified Saviour in heaven is "Surely, I come quickly."

May the glad response of our hearts be the same as John's: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

In the last part of this small book the writer has strived to put on paper his own belief with regard to the nature and order of these great future events as revealed in Holy Scripture. Much detail, especially with regard to the time of intense trouble on this earth, and also to the glorious reign of our coming King, has been omitted for lack of space. There are many students of prophecy who will differ somewhat from him along certain lines, chiefly those who would spiritualize some of these great prophecies, and thus rob them of their plain teaching, as the writer believes. There are also those who very strongly hold that God's people will pass through the great tribulation, and will not be caught up into the Lord's Presence until He comes to deliver the Jews and to set up His Kingdom. Their belief is that Christians who are then caught up from the earth will immediately return with our Lord to share with Him in His reign on earth.

Because some Christians who have deeply studied the Scriptures on this point hold that this interpretation is the correct one, the writer dare not be dogmatic about it, but would urge his readers to study the Bible for themselves and seek continually for the light of God's Holy Spirit.

These future wonderful events which we have been studying together come as a great challenge to our hearts. To many people they may seem to be unrealistic and improbable; but we must remember that they are bound up in the same unique Book with the very many prophecies which have already had a literal and accurate fulfilment.

We have already seen that very many of the great predictions which have been fulfilled in past history foretold events which at the time they were written seemed as if they could never come to pass. Yet, in every case the unlikely event did take place, and the forecast of the future has been proved by history to be true and reliable.

It is only logical to believe that those prophecies which as yet have had no fulfilment will also be proved in the coming days to be true and accurate.

Yes, indeed, it is the writer's deep conviction that the Bible foretells accurately, and woe be to those who think they know better than God.

"For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven."
Psalm 119 : 89.

"Thy Word is very pure : therefore Thy servant loveth it." Psalm 119 : 140.

II Peter 3 : 11 and 12, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God ?" Hebrews 9 : 28. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."